IRISH 1798 COLLECTION

Mrs TONE and HER SONS THEOBALD WOLFE and MATTHEW.

From original Drawings taken in 1778. in the possession of Mrs Moore.

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THE

UNITED IRISHMEN,

THEIR

LIVES AND TIMES.

BY

R. R. MADDEN, M.D.

WITH NUMEROUS ORIGINAL PORTRAITS.

"The mind of a nation, when long fettered and exasperated, will struggle and bound, and when a chasm is open, will escape through it, like lava from the crater of a volcano."—J. K. L.

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DEDICATORY LETTER.

TO DR. JAMES JOHNSON, M.D.

My dear Sir,

You probably are not unacquainted with the name of a society which existed in Ireland about forty-five years ago,—the Society of United Irishmen, but you may not have had the subject of their wrongs, nor their efforts to redress them, forced on your attention. Perhaps the actors in that struggle may be known to you as a confraternity of Cades and Warbecks, wantonly "unthreading the rude eye of rebellion." And yet, if it be not to consider the matter "too curiously," had it pleased Providence to have cast your lot in the times of the men I am attempting to illustrate, and on the spot where the advocacy of civil and religious freedom was a crime;—had you seen, as they did,

the people of the land no more regarded by the lords of the soil than the beasts which perish;—like them, had you endured the insolence and arrogance of Orangeism, or witnessed the atrocious acts committed by the privileged ruffians of its bands;—had you experienced, as they did, in your purse and in your person, the effects of rapacity on one hand, and of oppression on the other, or felt the degradation of being regarded as a stranger or an abject satrap in your own land; an alien in religion and in race, even in the country that gave you birth;—perhaps, had your destiny thrown you on such bad times, and amidst such scenes, though you might have possessed your soul in patience, your voice would not be wanting in reprobation of such "governmental abandonment," and your wonder would have been, not that it had been resisted, but that it had been so long endured; your voice would have been lifted up against those evils when the occasion came for their denunciation; and feeling that you possessed the power of breaking down some one or other of the forts and fences of injustice, by bringing its outrages into notice, and consequently into disrepute, you would not have said there was peace, where oppression and injustice were triumphant. Men like you, of strong convictions, of sober

judgment, and of sound principles,—these are the men who are needed to stand forth on all occasions which call for the defence of the rights and liberties of their fellow men,—not of those alone of one class, or of a particular creed or country, but of all, by whatever name they are called, whether English, Irish, Scotch, the far-off people of Africa, Affghanistan, or Hindostan, or those on our own borders: and thinking in several of your writings that I have seen these sentiments occasionally peep through the folds of medical philosophy and scientific literature, I have gratified feelings of friendship of long standing in thus availing myself of the opportunity of inscribing these volumes to you.

I am, my dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

R. R. MADDEN.

London, May 16*th*, 1843.

ERRATA.

Page 134, chapter numbered VI. should be V.

Page 151, third line, for "Prisk" read "Risk."

Page 145, last line, for "corporate" read "corporals."

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

THE various outbreaks of popular discontent which took place between 1760 and 1790, and got the names of insurrections and Popish rebellions, can only be regarded as agrarian outrages, the result of oppressive measures taken for the collection of exorbitant rents, the exaction of tithes, and the conversion of the small holdings of the peasantry into pastures. The destitution attendant on those measures, and especially the latter practice, in a country where the unfortunate people turned adrift had no manufacturing districts to fly to for the means of support, drove the persons thus beggared, and deprived of house and home, to those acts of violence and desperation which usually follow in the footsteps of distress and ignorance. The same interests which reduced the people to misery, were exerted in representing their condition as the result of their own turbulent and lawless proceedings, and the conduct of any of the gentry of their own persuasion who sympathised with their sufferings, or dared to attempt to redress their wrongs, as influenced by seditious and disaffected motives. Wherever agrarian outrages were committed, and their causes were inquired into by such persons, the landlords and the tithe-owners never failed to raise a clamour against their character for loyalty; and even the writers of the day, who ventured to espouse the cause of the parties who had the courage and humanity to interfere in behalf of the unfortunate people, represented their advocates as well-meaning "but giddy and officious men."

The conduct was thus designated of a Roman Catholic priest of the name of Sheehy, a man of unblemished character, honoured for his piety, and the memory of whose virtues even to this day is held in the highest veneration in the place where he was most foully murdered, and the name of Law desecrated by the formal sanction of his death. His crime was one which the landlords of that day deemed treason to their class,—he interfered between them and their victims, where they were driven from their lands, and unmercifully dealt with. He was said to be inimical to the collection of Church-rates in the parish of Newcastle,* where there were no parishioners, and was suspected of holding seditious opinions with respect to the divine right of a clergy to the tenth part of the produce of a half-starved people, whose souls they had no cure of. For these offences they persecuted to the death a minister of the gospel, who had neither offended against its law, nor against the laws of his country.

Mr. Arthur Young, an Englishman, and an eye-witness of the Munster tumults, plainly attributes these disturbances to the inhuman conduct of the landlords. "The landlord of an Irish estate," he says, "inhabited by Roman Catholics, is a sort of despot, who yields obedience in whatever concerns the poor to no law but that of his will."†

The flame of resistance to their oppression, he states was kindled by "severe treatment in respect of tithes, united with a great speculative rise of rents about the same time. The atrocious acts they (the Whiteboys) were guilty of made them the objects of general indignation: Acts were passed for their punishment, which seemed calculated for the meridian of Barbary; this arose to such a height, that by one (law) they were to be hanged, under certain circumstances, without the common formality of a trial, which though repealed the following session, marks

* He had succeeded in abolishing them in the parish of Newcastle, and from his time to the present, they have been unknown there.

† Young's Tour, vol. ii., pages 40 and 42.

the spirit of punishment; while others remain yet the law of the land that would, if executed, tend more to raise than quell an insurrection."

Another English writer, Dr. Campbell, in his "Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland," speaks of the country at the time he wrote, 1777, "instead of being in a progressive state of improvement, as verging to depopulation; the inhabitants are either moping under the sullen gloom of inactive indigence, or blindly asserting the rights of nature in nocturnal insurrections, attended with circumstances of ruinous devastation and savage cruelty; and must we not conclude that there are political errors somewhere?" After detailing the causes of Whiteboyism, he adds, "What measures have been taken for laying this spirit? None that I hear of, but that of offering rewards for apprehensions and discoveries. This evil must nevertheless originate from some other cause than mere depravity of nature; for to suppose that a set of people should conspire to run the risk of being hanged and gibbeted for the mere pleasure of doing mischief to their neighbours, would argue a degree of diabolism not to be found in the human heart."*

The best and by far the most clear and explicit account of the cause of those agrarian disturbances, is to be found in a pamphlet rarely to be met with, printed in Dublin, in 1762, under the title of "An Enquiry into the Causes of the Outrages committed by the levellers or Whiteboys of Munster, by M—— S——, Esq."

"Some landlords," says the author, "in Munster, have set their lands to cotters far above their value; and, to lighten their burthen, allowed commonage to their tenants, by way of recompense: afterwards, in despite of all equity, contrary to all compacts, the landlords enclosed these commons, and precluded their unhappy tenants from the only means of making their bargains tolerable. The law, indeed, is open to redress them; but they do not know the laws,

* Dr. Campbell's "Philosophical Survey," pages 293—297.

or how to proceed; or if they did know them, they are not equal to the expense of a suit against a rich tyrant. Besides, the greatest part of these tenures are by verbal agreement, not by written compact. Here is another difficulty: if these wretches should apply to law, what could they do in this case? They were too ignorant of the principles of equity to seek a seasonable redress: they had too deep a sense of their sufferings to feel the less pungent call of virtue; nay, they thought equity was on their side, and iniquity on the part of their landlords, and thence flew with eagerness to what is ever the resource of low and uncultivated minds, violence. * * "

" It is not uncommon in Munster to charge from four to five guineas per acre for potato ground; but we shall suppose the price but four guineas, that is, ninety-one shillings: the daily wages for labourers is four-pence per day: there are three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, of which fifty-two are Sundays; and suppose but thirteen holidays, the remainder is three hundred working days, the wages for which is an hundred shillings, that is nine shillings above the price of their land, of which five shillings are paid for the tithe, and two for hearth money; and the remainder goes towards the rent of their cabin. What is left? Nothing. And, out of this nothing, they are to buy seed for their garden, salt for their potatoes, and rags for themselves, their wives, and children. It must be observed, that in this calculation, I have mentioned three hundred working days, though it is known, from the greater number of holidays observed in that part of the kingdom than in any other, from the number of wet and broken days, joined with the natural laziness of the people, there are not above two hundred days for which they are paid. What an aggravation does this make in the account? And will the best crop enable them to maintain a family, often of six or eight persons, under the difficulties we have mentioned? It is this exorbitant rent which produces the complaint of tithes, ready money they have not;

the reward of their labour goes in payment of their rent; they can seldom amass the mighty sum of two shillings to pay their hearth money? how then shall they collect five shillings for tithes? The clergymen in that country possess livings which have a thousand acres under black cattle. Here the incumbent gets nothing; and the cottier's garden becomes his principal support. A gentleman of birth, perhaps, piety, and learning, is brought to the disagreeable necessity of chaffering with a set of poor wretches for twopence, or sixpence, in a bargain, or forego the support of his own family. This business grows irksome to him, and he seeks some one person who will take the whole trouble upon him. The distress of the parishioner is heightened by this agreement; and the tithe-monger, who is generally more rapacious than humane, squeezing out the very vitals of the people; and by process, citation, and sequestration, drags from them the little which the landlord and the king had left them."

If the landlords of Ireland had been in alliance with France, and bent upon promoting its views in the former country, by rendering the people discontented, they could not have done more for French policy than they thus effected by driving the people to desperation.

These were the real rebels to the British Crown, and the worst enemies of all to the connexion that ought to have subsisted with mutual good will between the two countries.

In 1760, a variety of causes had conspired to reduce the people to the lowest degree of misery. The revenue, the unerring barometer of their condition, plainly indicated in this year the distress that universally prevailed; a fatal disease swept off vast quantities of their cattle, and provisions became unusually dear. The distress was not sudden or partial; it had gone on increasing for the past five years. The House of Commons, in their address to his Excellency, on referring to this subject and to the want of corn to which the distress of the

country was largely to be attributed, declared "they would most cheerfully embrace every practicable method to promote tillage."

The members of that House kept the word of promise to the Viceroy's ears, and broke it to the people's hope. They scandalously embraced the opportunity of promoting their own temporary interests by turning the tilled lands of vast districts into pasturage, and even enclosing the commons where their impoverished tenants had hitherto been permitted to graze their cattle, and by such means had been enabled to meet the landlords' and the tithe owners' exorbitant demands.

When a famishing peasantry ceases to look upon the lords of the soil as their natural protectors, and they regard the law without respect, because it is administered by men "who grind the faces of the poor," their outrages, it will be found by melancholy experience, are more violent, ungovernable, driftless, and vindictive in their character, than those that are excited by any other species of oppression.

So it was with the lawless acts of the Whiteboys, wanton in cruelty, wild in their schemes, and heedless of the consequences arising from the destruction of property; and so it always will be with the turbulence of a people who have been trampled upon by the proprietors of the soil, as those of Ireland had been. The proprietors cared, in fact, no more for their miserable tenants than the Bashaws of Turkey are wont to do for the Christian rajahs of the distant provinces, which are delivered into their hands, to be ruled over with a rod of iron, to have the last para wrung from their labour, for the benefit of strangers to the soil, and of ulemas in Stamboul, from whose functions they derive no earthly or spiritual advantages.

Lord Northumberland, addressing the Parliament in 1763, in speaking of the disorders in the south, intimated that *the means of industry would be the remedy*, from whence it followed the want of those means must have been the cause. The Commons,

in accordance with the Viceroy's suggestion, promised to give their best attention *to the Protestant Charter Schools and Linen Manufacture.* The people, it was well known, would not send their children to the former, and were totally ignorant of the latter. In fact, when the Catholic people were crying out for bread, the Commons were proposing Protestant schools for the starving children of a Roman Catholic population, and shuttles and looms for an agricultural peasantry.

The landlords in the House of Commons carried out the views on which they acted in their several districts; they declared the riots which had taken place in 1762 and 1763, to be Popish rebellions. They appointed a Committee "to inquire into the causes and progress of the Popish insurrection in the province of Munster."

In 1764, the Lords and Commons, in their address to the Viceroy, the Earl of Northumberland, characterized the acts of the rioters as, "Treason against the State." In their "pretended grievances, no traces of oppression can be seen; we can only impute their disorders to the artful contrivances of designing men, who, from selfish and interested views, have spread this licentious spirit among the people."

The Government, on the other hand, sent down a Commission into the disturbed districts in 1762, consisting of men of eminence in the law, and of known ability, loyalty and impartiality, to report upon the character of those tumultuous risings, and the result of their inquiry may be gathered from a paragraph in the London Gazette of May, 1762, wherein it is stated, "that the authors of those riots consisted indiscriminately of persons of different persuasions, and that no marks of disaffection to His Majesty's person or government appeared in any of those people."

In 1804, a work was published in London, called, "Strictures upon a Historical Review of the State of Ireland," by Francis Plowden.

The author of the "Strictures," labours hard to

prove the Munster riots to have been Popish plots, produced by the machinations of Popish priests and bishops; one of the former, the unfortunate Father Sheehy, and the latter the titular Archbishop of Cashel, Dr. Butler. Alluding to the passage quoted (originally by Curry, in a pamphlet entitled, "A candid Inquiry," &c.) from the London Gazette of May, 1762, this author of the Strictures on Plowden's work, with an appearance of exactitude and closeness of research calculated to impose on his readers, deliberately affirms, that he has searched the Gazette, but the passage referred to is not to be found; but he states, "I have found this paragraph verbatim in the 'Whitehall Evening Post' of the 4th of May, 1762, which paragraph was no doubt written in Ireland, and sent over here for insertion by some abettor of this insurrection, in order to deceive the people of England, a practice very systematically pursued of late years."

The preceding paragraph is an admirable specimen of the manner in which history is falsified to suit the unworthy purposes of bigotry. On referring to "The London Gazette, published by authority," of May 4th, 1762, I find the following passage: "The riots and disturbances lately raised in the southern part of Ireland, by a set of people called levellers, are entirely put a stop to by the vigour and activity of the Earl of Halifax. It appears that the authors of those disturbances consisted indiscriminately of persons of different persuasions, and that no marks of disaffection to His Majesty's person or government appeared in any of these people."

In 1766 the unfortunate people having paid the penalty of "their crimes and their pretended grievances," having been dealt with according to law, the country was restored to that kind of quiet which usually follows terror, and in Ireland passes for tranquillity. The landlords then had leisure, and a colourable pretext in their own exaggerated representations of the treasonable designs of the quelled rioters, to bring all those Roman Catholic gentry

to an account, who were known to have afforded any pecuniary assistance to the miserable wretches who had been thrown into jail or brought to trial, and were without the means of making any defence, except what they obtained from the charity of those of their own communion, who were thus far able to assist them. An expression of sympathy with their unfortunate condition, a single act of interference in their behalf before a justice of the peace, or the appearance at the trial of one of them as a witness, and it will be seen, even as a legal adviser of the party accused, was sufficient to bring the loyalty of every such person into question, to compromise his character, and to put his life in peril.

The turpitude of involving men in the crimes of those they succoured in a jail, or enabled to procure the means of defence on the trial, which the law allowed, but which they were unable to provide, did not originate with the persecutors of the Sheehys, the Farrells, the Buxtons, and the Keatings of 1766; nor did the baseness of the practice terminate with the troubled time they lived in. In 1798, the same principle was not only acted on by magistrates, but the Lord Chancellor of Ireland gave the sanction of his authority to the execrable doctrine, that the act of contribution towards the defraying the expense incurred for the defence of persons accused of treason involved a participation in the crime.

This was one of the charges in the report of the Secret Committee of 1793, drawn up by the Lord Chancellor, which was hung, *in terrorem*, over the heads of some members of the Catholic Committee. One of these gentlemen, Mr. John Sweetman, was especially pointed out as a person in criminal communication with the defenders, and the only proof of his criminality was a letter, in which mention was made of some steps that had been taken towards assisting the brother of a Roman Catholic gentleman of the name of Nugent, who had been committed to jail on a charge of defenderism. The report of the Committee stated, that although the body of the

Roman Catholics were not privy to this application of the money levied on them, the conduct, however, was suspicious, "of ill-disposed individuals of their persuasion resident in Dublin."*

The Government had previously sent to Sweetman, as Secretary of the Catholics, to inform him, the publication of the report of the Secret Committee would endanger his life, and offered, if he avowed his indiscretion, the report would be quashed. And we are informed, by Emmet, in his "Essay toward the History of Ireland," that Sweetman refused to do so.

The same accusation of contributing towards the defence of prisoners charged with treasonable practices, who were his own tenants, was brought against the unfortunate Sir Edward Crosbie, and this *prima facie* evidence of disaffection weighed down every proof of innocence,—for every other charge carried with it its own self-evident refutation, and an act of Christian charity was made mainly instrumental to his ignominious death.

If these were solitary instances of a practice founded on a condemnation of the common dictates of humanity, it would have been needless to advert to them; but unfortunately there are too many of them on record in the criminal proceedings of those times to allow them to be passed over, or to render it unnecessary to make the remembrance of them a bar to their recurrence. We surely need no stronger argument to convince us, that if the unfortunate country, which is delivered up to civil war, were not forsaken by the spirit of Christianity, such infamous doctrines could not have been put forth. The Founder of our religion, in summing up the acts of mercy, the performance of which was rewarded with the possession of His heavenly kingdom, specifies this act of mercy among others as one which establishes a claim to the highest recompense of all: "I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me."

* Report of Lords' Secret Committee, 1793. Appendix, No. 1, p. 3.

The language of our rulers in Ireland has been,—Your brethren are poor and oppressed, but you shall not pity them; they are in prison, but it shall be treason for you to go to them; they are naked and open to their enemies, but you shall not succour them. They have been hungry and thirsty, and we have not given them to eat or to drink: and as we have not suffered them to murmur against us, neither shall you sympathize with them, unless you are willing to share in the punishment which is prepared for traitors and their accomplices.

General descriptions of popular tumults, and of calamitous occurrences often convey a less accurate idea of the events in question, than the particular details of the fate or sufferings of one of those actors or victims in the strife, whose history is bound up with the events that excite our interest.

The account of the persecution and judicial murder of Father Nicholas Sheehy, of Clogheen, is an epitome in itself of the history of Ireland at that period, of its persecuted people, of the character of their oppressors, of the divisions secretly encouraged and sedulously fostered by the rulers of the country between one class of the community and another, and, finally, of the use made of the weakness consequent on the general disunion.

In 1762, the Earl (subsequently Marquess) of Drogheda, was sent to the disturbed districts in the province of Munster, in command of a considerable military force, and fixed his head-quarters at Clogheen, in the county of Tipperary. The Whiteboys were at that period in the habit of assembling in large bodies, generally by night, and committing depredations on the properties of those obnoxious to them. On the night of the day on which the Marquess arrived at Clogheen, one of those assemblages took place in the neighbourhood, with the intention, it was believed, of assaulting the town. A clergyman of the name of Doyle, parish priest of Ardfinnan, on learning their intention, one of the informers states in his depositions, went among them, and succeeded

in preventing them carrying their project into effect. His purpose, however, in so doing, as usual, was represented as insidious.

From this time the Earl of Drogheda made several incursions into the adjacent country, and "great numbers of the insurgents were," we are informed, by Sir Richard Musgrave, killed by his lordship's regiment, and "French money was found in the pockets of some of them." This assertion is strenuously opposed by Curry and O'Connor, and in one of the letters of Lord Charlemont, published in Hardy's Memoirs of his Lordship,* mention is made of the attention of the Custom-house officers of Dublin being directed to the circumstance of "a very considerable number of French crowns having been received at the Custom-house, which could not have been the result of trade, since little or no specie is imported from France in exchange for our commodities."

Sir Richard Musgrave states that a Mr. Conway, an Irish resident at Paris, was in the habit of remitting money to the insurgents on the part of the French government. This statement rests on his authority, *valeat quod valeat.* Lord Charlemont, however, is far from ascribing the real causes of those disturbances to French gold or intrigue.† "Misery, oppression, and famine,—these were undoubtedly the first and original causes." And he adds, "I will not pretend to attest that French intrigue may not sometimes have interfered to aggravate and inflame the fever already existing."

Mr. Matthew O'Connor speaks of "the circulation of French coin as the natural result of a smuggling intercourse with France, and in particular of the clandestine export of wool to that country."‡

While the Earl of Drogheda continued at Clogheen, the troops were constantly employed in the

* Memoirs of the Earl of Charlemont, vol. i. p. 175; Sir Richard Musgrave's Memoirs of the Rebellion, &c. p. 54.

† Memoirs of the Earl of Charlemont, p. 174.

‡ History of the Irish Catholics, by M. O'Connor, p. 288.

old mode of pacifying the country, and some of the gentlemen in the neighbouring districts were in the habit of scouring the country at the head of armed parties; the gentlemen who chiefly distinguished themselves in these military exploits were, William Bagnell, Esq., Sir Thomas Maude, and John Bagwell, Esq. The exertions of these gentlemen in their military and magisterial pursuits were actively seconded in the arrangement of the panel at the assizes by Daniel Toler, Esq., High Sheriff of the county, an ancestor of the judge celebrated for his judicial energy at another calamitous period of Irish history, and in the getting up of the prosecutions by a minister of the gospel, the Rev. John Hewetson.

While the head-quarters of the Earl of Drogheda were fixed at Clogheen, the services of the usual auxiliaries to the Irish magistracy were called into requisition. No Roman Catholic leader of any respectability had been yet fixed on to give a plausible character to the rumour of a Popish insurrection, the parish priest of the town was accordingly suspected of disaffection; he had collected money for the defence of some of the rioters who were his parishioners, and the acquittal of any of them was attributed to his interference. Father Nicholas Sheehy was born at Fethard, about six miles from Clonmel. He was sent to France at an early age to receive that education which it was a capital offence to communicate to one of his creed at home. He was well descended, and related to some of the most respectable Catholic gentlemen of the county. A man of the name of John Bridge, having been arrested on a charge of Whiteboyism, and examined by torture, and "severely punished by court martial," was induced to come forward with charges against several respectable persons, of having been amongst the rioters who had assembled in the neighbourhood of the town, the night of the day on which Lord Drogheda arrived at Clogheen. A woman of abandoned character, who had been excommunicated by the priest Sheehy, was likewise procured, at a later period, to

swear to an information of a similar tendency to Bridge's. Sheehy was arrested, but the evidence against him could not have been very conclusive, for after his examination he was suffered to go at large on the understanding that he was to appear if further evidence was brought against him in corroboration of the informers. The proceedings against Mr. Sheehy remained thus suspended, when in the latter end of 1763, Bridge disappeared, and a report was circulated that he had been murdered by the Whiteboys. In March 1764, the High Sheriff and Grand Jury of the county of Tipperary published an advertisement setting forth: "That whereas the said John Bridge was missing since October preceding, *and was supposed to be murthered*, they did hereby promise a reward of 50*l.* to any person or persons who should discover, within twelve calendar months, any person or persons *concerned in said act*," *etc.*

The advertisement soon produced the desired effect. The only persons concerned in the appearance or non-appearance of the informer, were those who had been informed against. Father Sheehy was not named in the advertisement, but it was impossible that any doubt could be entertained as to the party interested in the disappearance of the informer, and therefore to be suspected of being privy to his murder.

The magistrates and gentry of Tipperary had been incensed against the Judge who presided at the preceding trials of the rioters. One of the few impartial and humane judges who then graced the Irish bench, Sir Richard Acton, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, had been sent upon a special commission to try a great number of these rioters two years previously. The trials were conducted with a show of justice that was extremely offensive to the local authorities, and the magistrates and grand jury raised such a clamour against the excellent judge that he was driven from the Irish bench, and went to England, where he accepted of the inferior appointment of Puisne Judge. The name of Sir

Richard Acton deserves to be remembered in Ireland with respect and honour; and if no other eulogy on his character were recorded it might be sufficient to say, that this Fletcher of his day was reviled by Sir Richard Musgrave; and that on the occasion of his return from Clonmel at the conclusion of the business of the special commission, the road along which he passed was lined on both sides with men, women and children, thanking him for the justice and the fairness of his conduct, in the discharge of his duty, and pouring blessings on him, as a just and impartial judge.*

This was a novel spectacle in Ireland: it was a touching exhibition, and one, it might be considered, that might have moved the pity, and softened the rancour of the enemies of these poor people. But justice and humanity were hateful to them, and the administration of the law, under the influence of either, was a course they could not comprehend or tolerate. In the clamour that was raised against this upright judge it is painful to find the great champion of popular rights (as the celebrated Dr. Lucas was deemed) taking an active part in his place in Parliament against the administration of justice, and the judicial authorities, on account of the leniency exhibited on the trials of the Popish rioters. On the 13th of October, 1763, in moving an instruction to the Committee, to inquire into the causes of the insurrections of the south, he expressed his amazement, "that the indictments in the south were only laid for a riot and a breach of the peace, while those in the north were all laid for high treason, and animadverted severely on the conduct of the judges who sat in the south."

The brawling patriot, who was wont to make the walls of Parliament reverberate with the thunder of his indignation when one of its privileges was endangered, could stand up in that house, and raise his voice in condemnation of measures of humanity,

* Plowden's History of Ireland, vol. ii. page 139.

when the unfortunate people stood in the utmost need of pity and protection.

He was replied to by the Solicitor General, who said, he was surprised at the speech of the honourable gentleman. "Several of the indictments had been laid for high treason in the south, as well as the north, and several had been executed upon the statute; but wherever lenity had been shown, it was only where reason and humanity required it."*

Before entering upon the further proceedings against the Rev. Mr. Sheehy, it was necessary to show the state of public feeling, not only in the disturbed districts in which he resided, but even in the House of Commons, on the subject of those agrarian disturbances.

Between the period of Bridge's disappearance and the spring of 1764, Mr. Sheehy was constantly menaced with prosecution; witnesses were frequently examined, and indictments framed, but no criminal proceedings followed.

At length, in the early part of 1764, he found his persecutors so bent on his destruction, that it became necessary for him to secrete himself. The Government had been prevailed upon to issue a proclamation against him, in which he was described as a fugitive from justice charged with high treason, and offering a reward of £300 for his apprehension. Sheehy no sooner was informed of the proclamation than he wrote to Mr. Secretary Waite, acquainting him "that he would save the Government the reward offered for taking him, by surrending himself out of hand to be tried for any crime he was accused of, not at Clonmel, (where he feared the power and malice of his enemies were too prevalent for justice,) but in the Court of King's Bench in Dublin," and accordingly he delivered himself up to Cornelius O'Callaghan, Esq., of whom the present Lord Lismore is the grand nephew.

Several of the preceding details are to be found in

* "Irish Debates," in the years 1763 and 1764, vol. i. page 48.

a pamphlet called "A Candid Inquiry into the Causes and Motives of the late Riots in the Province of Munster;" and as appears by a subsequent pamphlet by the same author, Dr. Curry, (a parallel between the pretended plot of 1762, and the forgery of Titus Oates, in 1679,) was written in the month of May, 1766.

Mr. Matthew O'Connor, in his history of the Irish Catholics, speaks in the highest terms of this pamphlet, from the opinions of Mr. Judge Robinson, Mr. Charles O'Connor, and Lord Taafe, he not having been able to procure it. Speaking of this pamphlet, the venerable Charles O'Connor states that no notes of the trials were taken at the time, and that it is only to this account of the proceedings and the declarations solemnly made of the victims, that we can refer for information that can give an insight into the proceedings against them. Such, however, is not the fact; notes of some of those trials do exist, and from them and the records of the Crown Office, and the original informations sworn against the parties, the following details are given.

The *Dublin Gazette* of 16th March, 1765, announces that, "About 8 o'clock on Wednesday night Nicholas Sheehy, a popish priest, charged with being concerned in several treasonable practices to raise a rebellion in this kingdom, for the apprehending of whom Government offered a reward of £300, was brought to town guarded by a party of light horse and lodged by the Provost in the Lower Castle Yard." It was not till the 10th of February, in the following year, that he was brought to trial in the Court of King's Bench. The Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, then, was the Right Honourable John Gore; Second Justice, Mr. Christopher Robinson; Third Justice, William Scott, Esq. The indictment charged the prisoner with acting as a leader in a treasonable conspiracy, exercising men under arms, swearing them to allegiance to the French king, and inciting them to rebellion. The witnesses produced were, a man of the name of John

Toohy, who had been committed to Kilkenny gaol on a charge of horse-stealing, a month previously to his examination having been given in against the prisoner; a woman of the name of Mary Butler; and a vagrant boy of the name of Lonergan.

It would be difficult to comprehend the nature or extent of the wickedness exhibited in these proceedings, without referring to the circumstances, which rendered Sheehy and others more obnoxious to the magisterial conspirators than the persons of his persuasion in the neighhourhood who had the good fortune to escape being similarly implicated. The enclosing of commonage in the neighbourhood of Clogheen in the winter of 1761-2, had inflicted much injury on the parishioners of Father Sheehy.

About that time, the tithes of two Protestant clergymen, Messrs. Foulkes and Sutton, in the vicinity of Ballyporeen, were rented to a tithe proctor of the name of Dobbyn. The tithe farmer instituted in 1762 a new claim on the Roman Catholic people in his district, of five shillings for every marriage celebrated by a priest. On what grounds this claim was put forward I have not been able to ascertain, but the fact of its having been preferred and levied admits of no doubt.* This new impost was resisted by the people, and as it fell heavily on the poor parishioners of Father Sheehy, he denounced it publicly.

The first "risings" in his neighbourhood were connected with their resistance to this odious tax. The collection of church cess in a parish adjoining his, where there was no congregation, was likewise resisted by the people, and there is no doubt but their resistance to it was encouraged by Father Sheehy. On some occasions, when the parishioners assembled for the purpose of devising some means

* The above-named fact and many others connected with the private history of the persons referred to in this Memoir were communicated to me by one of the oldest inhabitants of Clogheen, one most thoroughly acquainted with those times and their events, Mr. Jeremiah M'Grath, a land surveyor, a relative of one of the persons persecuted and repeatedly prosecuted, Roger Sheehy.

of protection against the extortions of tithe proctors, Father Sheehy was present and took part in their discussions. These discussions, it is needless to say, they dared not hold in public; but private as they were, they were well known to the real conspirators in Clonmel. Father Sheehy was a bold and a fearless advocate of justice and humanity, a man whose misfortune it was in times like these to be gifted with a generous disposition, and to be animated with a hatred of oppression. But the very qualities which rendered him obnoxious to the enemies of the poor persecuted people left him naked and open to their enmity. He was courageous and confiding, chivalrous in defence of the poor and the oppressed, but incautiously prominent in the struggle, and heedless of the power and the wickedness of his enemies.

The various informations and indictments show plainly enough, differing as they do, in the most material particulars, yet concurring in one point, the influence of Sheehy over his parishioners, that his prosecutors were casting about them at random for evidence of any kind or character that might rid them of the annoyance of a man of an independent mind, and by his implication give additional colour to the pretended Popish plot.

For several months previously to Mr. Sheehy's surrender, he had been in concealment, flying from house to house of such of his parishioners as he could confide in. He had been frequently obliged to change his abode to avoid the rigorous searches that were almost daily made for him. At length, terror and corruption had exerted such an influence over his own flock that he hardly knew whom to trust, or in whose house to seek an asylum. Indeed it is impossible to wade through the mass of informations sworn to against him by persons of his own persuasion without wondering at the extent and the successfulness of the villany that was practised against him. His last place of refuge at Clogheen was in the house of a small farmer, a Protestant of the name of Griffiths, adjoining the churchyard of

Shandrahan, where his remains now lie. The windows of this house open into the churchyard, and there Father Sheehy was concealed for three days, hid during the day in a vault in the latter place, and during the night in the house, when it was necessary to keep up a large fire, so benumbed with cold he used to be when brought at nightfall from the place that was indeed his living tomb. The house is still standing, and inhabited by the grandson of his faithful friend, and one not of his own creed it is to be remembered. The last service rendered to him at Clogheen was likewise by a Protestant, a gentleman in the commission of the peace, Mr. Cornelius O'Callaghan, and to whom he surrendered himself. This gentleman gave him one of his horses to convey him to Dublin and the sum of ten guineas to bear his expenses.

Mr. O'Callaghan's high rank, his character for loyalty, his position in society, were not sufficient to secure him from the malignity of the magisterial conspirators. Mr. O'Callaghan was denounced by Bagwell as a suspected person. Lord James Cahir, the ancestor of Lord Glengall, was likewise declared to be on the black list of this gentleman, and of his associate the Rev. J. Hewetson; both these gentlemen had to fly the country to save their lives, and the noblemen who are their successors would do well to remember how necessary it is to keep the administration of justice in pure hands, that rapacious villany may be discomfited in its attempts to promote its interests by the inculpation of men, who have broad lands and local influence to be deprived of by convictions and confiscations.

One of the earliest charges of Whiteboyism brought against him, stands thus recorded in the indictment and information book in the Crown Office :*—

"Nicholas Sheehy bailed in 2,000*l.*; Dennis

* Once for all I have to state that the above document and all the others of a similar kind, which are here given, were collected by myself and copied from the original official documents in the Crown Office.

Keane, 1,000*l.*; Nicholas Dogherty, 1,000*l.* A true Bill. Clonmel General Assizes, May 23, 1763, before Right Hon. Warden Flood and Hon. William Scott. Nicholas Sheehy, a Popish priest, bound over in Court last assizes, trial then put off by the Court, indicted for that he, with divers others ill-disposed persons and disturbers of the peace, on the second day of March, in the second year of the reign of George III., at Scarlap, did unlawfully assemble and assault William Ross, and did wickedly compel him to swear that he would never discover anything to the prejudice of the Whiteboys, &c. William Ross bound over in 100*l.* estreated; James Ross, 100*l.* estreated."

The Rosses of Garrymore were Roman Catholics of the middle rank, and had rendered themselves obnoxious to the people at the commencement of these agrarian disturbances by enclosing common-age adjoining their lands at Dromlemmon.

A party of levellers had broken down the fences with which they had enclosed these commons, but whether the persons engaged in this act were parishioners of Father Sheehy, or had received any encouragement from him, or whether the charge was brought forward from private resentment, or at the instigation of Sheehy's persecutors, we have no means of knowing. It is clear, however, from the forfeiture of their recognizances, that they had taken a step they repented of, or were not able to follow up.* Sheehy was evidently ignorant of this proceeding of theirs, for on his trial he called on one of the Rosses to prove that he had slept at their house the night Bridge was said to have been murdered, and on his examination the fact was denied by him. Every step in this nefarious perse-

* At a little distance from the grave of Father Sheehy, the Rosses lie buried in the churchyard of Shandrahan. The inscription on their tombstone states that James Ross (the father) died in 1765. William died in 1787. The nephew of the latter treated the successor of Father Sheehy in Clogheen with great violence, not long after which he was thrown from his horse and killed on the spot.

cution is marked with perfidy of more than ordinary baseness.

The custom of first "presenting" a Popish priest in those times, and then trumping up charges of sedition, and encouragement of agrarian outrages, was in full force at this period. Sheehy had been thus presented before any other charge was brought against him.

At the same assizes at which the first bill was found against him, a true bill was likewise found against Michael Quinlan, a Popish priest, for having at Aghnacarty and other places exercised the office and functions of a Popish priest against the peace and statute, &c.

To make the surety of conviction doubly sure, as in Sheehy's case, a second indictment was sent up on the same occasion, charging him with "riotously assembling at Aghnacarty against the peace," on the same day as named in the former indictment.

At the General Assizes at Clonmel, on the 23rd May, 1763, a number of persons were indicted, charged with Whiteboy offences, and amongst them we find the names of the witnesses who were made the main supporters of the Bagnall, Maude, and Bagwell conspiracy, or, as they termed it, the Popish plot. The following persons were then tried and acquitted, Tim. Guynan, John, Michael, Daniel, and James Lonergan. Two of the Lonergans were the nephews of Guynan, a hackler, lads between the ages of 15 and 17; one of them, John Lonergan, was the witness, on whose evidence the managers mainly relied for convictions in the subsequent trials. This boy was an idle vagrant, noted in his neighbourhood for his vicious habits. He was produced on the trials dressed out for the occasion in a long outside coat, for the purpose of causing him to look taller and older than he was.

At the Clonmel Summer Assizes of 1764, Nicholas Sheehy was again indicted, and seven other persons out on bail were included in the same indictment, wherein it set forth, "That they on the 6th of

January, in the fourth year of the king's reign, at Shanbally, did assault John Bridge, against the peace."

At the same assizes, a true bill was found against Edward Meehan, Nicholas Sheehan, Nicholas Lee, John Magan, John Butler, and Edmund Burke, charging them with "compassing rebellion at Clogheen, on the 7th March and 6th October, second year of the king, and unlawfully assembling in white shirts, in arms, when they did traitorously prepare, ordain, and levy war against the king;" and bound to appear as witnesses, Michael Guynan, Thomas Lonergan, and Mary Butler.

On the 19th November, 1764, Denis Brien, of Ballyporeen, was bound over before Mr. Cornelius O'Callaghan, to appear at the following assizes, "to answer *all things brought against him* by Michael Guynan, John Bridge, *or any other person, concerning the late disturbances.*"

The number of informations sworn to against all the leading Catholic gentry of the county by the Lonergans, Guynan, Toohy, the horse-stealer, and two abandoned women of the names of Butler and Dunlay, between the years 1763 and 1767, would fill a good-sized volume. The names of the magistrates before whom these informations, in almost every instance, were sworn, were John Bagwell, Thomas Maude, and the Rev. J. Hewetson.

At the General Assizes held at Clonmel the 16th March, 1765, before Chief Baron Willes and Mr. Justice Tennison, the following bills found at the former assizes were brought before the Grand Jury. Some of the trials were put off, all of the parties admitted to bail, or allowed to stand out on heavy recognizances, and the names of the persons who bailed the prisoners are deserving of notice; for it will be found, that to enter into sureties for a man marked out for ruin by the Clonmel conspirators was to draw down the vengeance of these conspirators on those who dared to come forward as witnesses, and stand between the victims and their persecutors.

I doubt if any thing more terribly iniquitous than

the proceedings which I have traced in these official records is to be met with in the history of any similar conspiracy.

The High Sheriff in 1765 was, Sir Thomas Maude; the foreman of the Grand Jury, Richard Pennefeather, Esq. The following are the persons named as having been formerly indicted and held to bail:—

"Edmund Burke, of Tullow, bail £500; his sureties, John Hogan and Thomas Hickey, of Frehans.

John Butler, innkeeper, Clogheen, bail £500; his sureties, George Everard, of Lisheenanoul, and James Butler, of Gurrane, county Cork.

Edward Meehan, Clogheen, £500; his sureties, Pierce Nagle, of Flemingstown; John Butler, of Mitchelstown; James Hickey, of Frehans; John Bourk, of Rouska.

Nicholas Sheehy, surrendered; James Buxton, Patrick Condon, and Patrick Boar, out."

After the names of these persons, against whom true bills had been found, the proceedings are thus recorded:—

"Trial put off last Assizes on an affidavit of the prosecutor; bound over then in Court to appear. Record since removed by certiorari.

"Indicted, Spring Assizes, 1764, for that they not having the fear of God before their eyes, nor the duty of their allegiance, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the devil, and departing from the true affection and natural obedience of our Lord the King, and intending, contriving, and conspiring to disquiet and disturb the peace of our said Lord the King, and all his liege subjects, on the 10th day of February, in the 2nd year of the king, and at divers other times before and after, at Clogheen, falsely, unlawfully, devilishly, and traitorously did compass, imagine, and intend to raise and levy open war, insurrection, and rebellion; and in order to fulfil and bring to effect the treasons and intentions aforesaid, afterwards, to wit same day, year, and place, did, traitorously and seditiously, assemble together with

200 other unknown persons armed with guns, pistols, and other weapons, as well offensive as defensive, dressed in white apparel, did falsely, unlawfully, and traitorously prepare, begin, and levy public war against our said Lord the King, against the peace and statute. MICHAEL GUYNAN, £50,
Bailed in Court."

The preceding details sufficiently explain the views and objects of the prosecutors, and their temporary defeat by the terms entered into by Father Sheehy with Government, by which a trial in Dublin was secured to him.

The trial, which took place on the 10th of February, 1766, in the Court of King's Bench, was impartially conducted; the conduct of the "managers" who got up the evidence, at every turn of the testimony, bore on its face the evident marks of subornation of perjury. The vile witnesses broke down, and after a trial of fourteen hours' duration, the persecuted priest was honourably acquitted. He had redeemed his pledge to the Government, he had given himself up, stood his trial, and proved his innocence. But no sooner was the verdict pronounced, than the faith of Government was broken with him. The unfortunate man was informed by the Chief Justice that a charge of murder was brought against him, and on this charge he must be committed to Newgate. He was accordingly taken from the dock, removed to the prison, and, after two or three days' imprisonment, was put into the hands of his merciless persecutors, to be forthwith conveyed to Clonmel.

The first intimation of the new charge against him was given to him in Dublin, a few days previously to his trial, by a person named O'Brien, who had accompanied him from Clogheen. Martin O'Brien, on account of his intelligence and prudence, had been chosen by the friends of the priest to accompany him to Dublin, and he gave some proof of his fitness for his appointment, by strongly urging on him, a few days previously to his trial, to quit the kingdom.

Father Sheehy was then at large; he had been confined for a few days after his surrender in the provost in the castle-yard. He was placed under the charge of Major Joseph Sirr, then town-major, and father to the person of less enviable notoriety in the same office at a later period. His innocence was so manifest to Mr. Secretary Waite and to Major Sirr, that he was relieved from all restraint, and the latter held himself responsible for his appearance at the time appointed for his trial.

While he was at large, he was informed by O'Brien that a person had brought him an account from Clonmel, that no sooner had the news of Father Sheehy's surrender been received, than a rumour got abroad that a charge of murder was to be brought against him. He recommended Father Sheehy not to lose a moment in getting out of the kingdom, and urgently pressed him to put himself the same day on board a packet for England.

O'Brien several years afterwards stated to my informant, that Sheehy smiled at the proposal. He said, "The rumour of Bridge's death was raised only to frighten him out of the country, but he would not gratify his enemies, and if they brought such a monstrous charge against him, he could easily disprove it. Sheehy's arrival in Dublin, it is to be borne in mind, was only five months after the alleged murder, and at the time of his departure from Clogheen, it is positively affirmed by Magrath, on the authority of O'Brien, that Father Sheehy had then no knowledge of the murder, and the probability is, that it was in Dublin a fugitive named Mahony, when about quitting the kingdom, had made the revelations to him.

Sheehy was conveyed on horseback, under a strong military escort, to Clonmel, his arms pinioned, and his feet tied under the horse's belly. While in confinement in the gaol of Clonmel he was double bolted, and treated in every respect with the utmost rigour. In this condition he was seen by one of his old friends, and while this gentleman was condoling with him on his unfortunate condition, he pointed to his legs, which were ulcerated by the cords he had been bound

with on his way from Dublin. He said, laughing, "Never mind, we will defeat these fellows;" and he struck up a verse of the old Irish song of "*Shaun na guira.*"

On the 12th of March, 1766, Sheehy was put on his trial at Clonmel, for the murder of John Bridge. Most of the witnesses who gave evidence on the former trial were produced on this occasion.

Among the new witnesses was a woman of abandoned character, commonly known by the name of Moll Dunlea, but introduced on the trial as Mrs. Mary Brady, the latter being the name of a soldier of the light horse with whom she then cohabited.

Nicholas Sheehy was indicted on the charge of having been present at and aiding and abetting Edmund Meighan in the murder of John Bridge. Mr. Sheehy had a sister, Mrs. Green, who resided at Shanbally, in the vicinity of Clogheen; and at this place, according to the evidence, the murder of Bridge, Lord Carrick, Mr. John Bagnell, Mr. William Bagnell, and other persons obnoxious to them, was first proposed by Mr. Sheehy to a numerous assemblage of Whiteboys; and by him, all those present were sworn to secrecy, fidelity to the French king, and the commission of the proposed murders, and subsequently the murder was committed by one of the party, named Edmund Meighan, of Grange, in the month of October, 1764.

Sheehy and Meighan were tried separately. The same evidence for the prosecution was produced on both trials. The notes of one of the jurors, taken at the trial of the latter, were communicated to the Editor of the "Gentleman's and London Magazine," with a view to establish the guilt of the accused parties; and, therefore, the account is to be taken as one, the leaning of which was certainly towards the prosecutors, and in support of the finding of the jury.*

John Toohy, sworn for the Crown.

Knows the prisoner; knew John Bridge; he is

* Gentleman's and London Magazine, June 1766; page 370.

dead, was killed by Edward Meighan; by a stroke of a bill-hook on the head at Shanbally, and died instantly; went to English's house at Shanbally, with Pierce Byrn, James Buxton, James Farrell, Silvester How, Darby Tierney; knew not for what purpose; saw John Walsh, Dennis Coleman, Peter Magrath and John Bridge, playing cards at English's house; went a small way out of the house, on James Farrell's call, into a field; saw many people in the field; to wit, Edward Meighan the prisoner, Nicholas Sheehy, Edward Prendergast, Thomas Beere, John Burke, Edward Burke, Thomas Magrath, Hugh Hayes, Roger Sheehy, Dennis Coleman, William Flyn, Edmund Sheehy, Edward Coffee, James Coghlan, John Walsh, Phillip Magrath, Thomas Harman, John Butler, and many others drawn up in a rank, as if to be reckoned. John Bridge and company went towards the people, and joined them. Nicholas Sheehy tendered an oath to John Bridge to deny his examinations; who refused to take it; on this refusal Pierce Byrn struck at him with a flane, which he defended with his left hand; then the prisoner drew a bill-hook from under a belt, and struck Bridge on the head, which to his recollection clove the skull; Bridge fell down dead instantly.

The same persons, in about half an hour, got a blanket, and carried the corpse to a field belonging to Connor's son, or Ross, at Ballybuskin, and buried him in a ploughed field, about two miles from the place of committing the murder.

An oath was then tendered by Nicholas Sheehy to all present, not to disclose what had passed that night, and to be true to the king of France, and Shaun Meskill and children, which most or all of them did. The prisoner took the oath; all approved of what happened; that as John Bridge was out of the way, Michael Guinan's testimony could not take effect. The field is called the Barn-field; knows not what was done with the body since; heard the prisoner say that the corpse was taken up and removed:

knows of a letter brought to James Buxton by John Dogherty, which was wrote by Nicholas Sheehy.

At the time of burying the corpse in the field, a little boy was found hiding in the ditch, and put up behind Nicholas Sheehy. The boy's name, John Lonnergan; believes he could not see him killed, or where he was buried, but could see the people carrying the body.

Cross-examined.—Came from Killcrow; has been in gaol for about four months; was sent to gaol.the 20th of September; first gave examinations against the prisoner about a month after committal; was committed for horse stealing; believes the 28th of October, 1764, was Tuesday, but cannot recollect; knew not of any rewards to be given by Government; remembers Clogheen fair in October, 1764, but not the day; Bridge was killed about ten or eleven at night; knows not whether before or after the fair of Clogheen; lived for a week before the murder with James Buxton, and returned to the same place; lived with James Buxton for three years before and after. Was employed to carry messages and letters to and from the Whiteboys; knows not whether the house belonged to English, but it was named for his; never was there after the murder; believes there were above an hundred present when the murder was committed; says the several people already named were present; says there is a dwelling house in the field where Bridge was buried; in his evidence in Dublin, he said the house was within a musket shot of the place of burial; knew the prisoners by seeing them at several meetings of the Whiteboys; gave in examinations against the Whiteboys in about a month after committal, and after the murder, a short time before he went to Dublin.

JOHN LONNERGAN, sworn.

Knows the prisoner; saw him in October, 1764, between Mr. Callaghan's and father Sheehy's; saw several in company with the prisoner: to wit, Thomas

Magrath, John Butler, Nicholas Sheehy, and many others, in the high road to Shanbally; that when he first saw them he slipped into a trench, being afraid of his life; was discovered in the trench by Thomas Magrath, and taken out and asked his business; they then put him behind Nicholas Sheehy; he saw them carry a corpse rolled up in a caddow; saw the head bloody on the side of the horse next to him; was not carried far before he was put from behind Sheehy; knew John Bridge, but did not know whether he was the corpse. *

They desired this evidence to go home another short road, and Nicholas Sheehy gave him three half-crowns, and desired him not to talk of what he saw, or to betray his uncle, Michael Guinan; is not very certain of the time of the murder of Bridge, but heard he was murdered; believes it was about the first of November was two years.

He was sent by his uncle, Michael Guinan, to John Bridge, for a pistole or guinea; does not recollect when, but it was on the same night that he saw the corpse, but did not go all the way on account of hearing the crowd, some on foot and some on horseback.

Heard that Bridge was killed on the same night, very soon after.

When he was taken from behind Nicholas Sheehy, the prisoner showed him a short cut to the town of Clogheen, and desired him not to follow the corpse, but to go home the short way; believes there were an hundred there; there were also present Buck Farrell, *and James Farrell.*

Cross-examined.—Saw the corpse after midnight. It was neither very dark nor very light; the days were not long, but rather short; believes it was Sunday night, because he saw people going to mass; knows not how long it was before Christmas; it was

* This part of the evidence is falsified: the boy swore that the head of the corpse he saw had been cloven nearly in two, and was that of John Bridge.—*R. R. M.*

three weeks before Christmas; people go to mass on holidays as well as Sundays, therefore it might be an holiday; he did not know the length of a week.

MARY BRADY, sworn.

She lived with her mother in Clogheen. Michael Kearney was in her house in October, 1764, and was called on by Nicholas Sheehy; she was present. Nicholas Sheehy said Kearney was to go with him that night; she followed them to Shanbally; saw a man, wrapped in a blanket, dead. She then and there saw Nicholas Sheehy, the prisoner Edmund Sheehy, Thomas Magrath, and several others; there were about an hundred. She first saw the body at Shanbally. They buried the body at Ballyhuskin, on the lands called the Barn; was not present at the burial; she saw a bill-hook in the prisoner's hand; the prisoner made an attempt to strike the corpse when in the blanket, and said that what had been done was very right; and it was a pity but to use all whores and rogues in like manner; she observed the bill-hook bloody; they left Shanbally shortly before she followed them.

She recollects no other words of the prisoner; in about eight days the corpse was taken up and buried at Ballysheehan, near Shanbally.

Says she was sent by Nicholas Sheehy to the prisoner—that he was to go on command—and he said he would obey; says she watched the party, and followed them from Clogheen to Ballyhuskin Barn; was desired by Nicholas Sheehy and Edmund Sheehy, alias Buck Sheehy, to stay at the end of the road, and not to go farther, and by the prisoner. She saw them bring the corpse in the same way as before, from Ballyhuskin to Ballysheehan; it was carried by turns; about an hundred present; followed the corpse most of the road to Ballysheehan; they said they would bury it in the churchyard there.

Nicholas Sheehy tendered an oath at the first and second burial on the cross, to be true to each other, and never to discover; the prisoner was sworn on the

cross at both burials; she heard the prisoner say it was John Bridge.

Cross-examined.—She remembers it was in October; knows not when the fair of Clogheen is held; says it was four days before Lieut. Chaloner went to Clogheen; she went after Michael Kearney, by whom she had a child, to Ballyhuskin; Kearney had no certain residence, but was at her mother's house the night Sheehy called on him.

The men were gathered about nine o'clock; says Michael Kearney was there present at the burial; there were many other women there; she was admitted, as Michael Kearney was such as they imagined; Kearney swore her; there were some Clogheen women there; she saw none prevented; Ballyhuskin how far from Shanbally, or Ballysheehan, she knows not; but thinks above three miles; all dressed as usual; it was neither light nor dark; did not go the high road.

For the Traverser.

Gregory Flannery, sworn.

He knew Michael Kearney; lived in Clogheen; saw him April, 1763, in Dublin; he went to borrow money from counsellor O'Callaghan; and if he could not get it, to quit the country; he gave the witness £60 in cash, who got a bill for £58 12*s.* 4*d.*, and left two letters; saw him go aboard a ship bound for Bristol or Parkgate; saw the ship sail below the wall; wrote to the witness about some things in about two months after; never heard of him since he left the kingdom, about the 22nd or 23rd of April, 1763.

Cross-examined.—He might have returned since without his knowledge; he lived in Dublin ten years, but never resided in the county of Tipperary.

Thomas Gorman, sworn.

Knew Michael Kearney twenty years; saw him in February or March, 1763; heard Michael Kearney went abroad, and received a letter from him, dated 7th of May, 1763, from London; received several other letters till September or October, 1763, when

he said he was going to Jamaica; often saw him when in the country, and believes if he had returned he would have seen him.

HENRY KEATING, sworn.

Knew Michael Kearney, in Jamaica, the beginning of March, 1764; saw him first there in December, 1763; he was in very good health; then did not think of returning; witness returned in August, 1764; left Jamaica in April, 1764; made some stay in London; has been in Clonmel since; believes he would have seen Kearney if he returned; it was Michael Kearney, of Clogheen.

Cross-examined.—Knew the county of Tipperary sixteen years; heard there was another Michael Kearney.

DENNIS MAGRATH, sworn.

Lives at Clogheen since he was born; knew Michael Kearney left Clogheen the 15th of April, 1763; he was the same Michael Kearney that kept Mary Brady.

Cross-examined.—Witness, a brother to Thomas Magrath, a prisoner; says Michael Kearney set off for Dublin the 15th of April, 1763; he received a letter in six or eight days from Dublin; he received letters from London the May following; he is sure Kearney did not return after he first went off.

DANIEL KEEFE, sworn.

Lived in Clogheen fifteen years; knew Michael Kearney; saw him last three years ago next April; knew him since 1752; heard he was in Jamaica; quitted on account of money due; sure if he was in Clogheen he must have seen him, unless he kept his room; he had a child by Mary Brady.

ANN HULLAN, sworn.

Remembers the fair of Clogheen, 1764; knows Mary Brady; her daughter, Mary Brady, lived with the witness in October, 1764; the fair is in October;

she lived with her mother; she was at the fair; lay in her own house the night before the fair; lay for two nights before the fair with her two daughters, Mary Brady one of the daughters, Eleanor Dunlea the other; lay in her own house, with her two daughters, in one bed: she and her daughter went to bed about eight or nine o'clock, two nights before the fair: Mary Brady remained the whole night in bed for the three nights; could not be out of bed without her knowing of it: knows not whether Mary Brady be married; she is not to be believed on her oath; three years next Easter since Michael Kearney left Clogheen; he was not at her house at any time in 1764; no one in company with her daughter but what she was present with.

ELEANOR DUNLEA, sworn.

Knows Mary Brady; the fair in Clogheen, before All-holland tide; a fair there every year in October; lay the fair night in bed with Mary Brady and her mother, and the night before, and the night before that, and the night after the fair; went to bed about seven; all went to bed together; has known Michael Kearney; does not remember his ever spending an hour in her house; it was usual with the family to go to bed early.

JOHN HENDERKIN, sworn.

Knows Edward Meighan the prisoner; the fair of Clogheen the 28th of October, 1764, was on a Monday; witness lives in Carrick; came to Clogheen; spent the night before the fair in prisoner's house, to which he went, as being his friend; prisoner keeps a free house in Clogheen; came to his house about five in the evening of the 28th; prisoner was at home before him, and remained with him all the evening; they went to bed about eight or nine o'clock; the prisoner was in the house when the witness went to bed; the prisoner did not go to bed all night, as the fair-day was to be next day, and he had work to finish for the fair; he and a journeyman were at work in

the same room where witness lay, who awoke several times, and still found them at work; lay awake about half an hour, and spoke to Meighan about working; did not go to sleep before ten; at which time Meighan the prisoner was in the room.

Cross-examined.—Meighan the prisoner is married to witness's sister; came from Carrick to Clogheen about five in the evening, where he found the prisoner, his wife, a journeyman and maid; prisoner sitting in the kitchen with man and maid; witness got cold meat in prisoner's house; did not speak to the journeyman since he came to town; an entry between the shop and kitchen; worked usually in a bedchamber, and not in the shop; they began to work after night-fall; no other person lay in the room without; the witness did not sleep before ten; did not sleep an hour together all night; said the prisoner could not go out unknown to him; he slept an hour together; does not think it possible for the prisoner to go out unknown to him; the prisoner and his journeyman were at work when he got up in the morning; witness, after the fair, lay with the prisoner in the same bed; prisoner and he went to bed together that night about ten; Meighan and he lay positively together all that night; heard the prisoner was charged with the murder of John Bridge, about a month ago; never applied to for his evidence by any one; knows not who told him of the murder; did not hear when the murder was committed; came voluntarily to give his evidence; heard the morning of the fair that John Bridge fled out of the country; never heard he was murdered but by common fame; had no conversation with the prisoner since he came to town, or since he was committed; is a nailor by trade.

JOHN TOOHY, produced a second time by Counsellor Hughes.

Knows the prisoner was present; says there was John Butler and Thomas Magrath, both of Clogheen, present.

EDMUND CALLAGHAN, for the prisoner.

Knows Shanbally; knew it in October, 1764, and lived there seventeen years; no one of the name of English in Shanbally since he knew it.

Cross-examined.—Knows Glyn Callaghan; some English live above Glyn Callaghan, on a purchase made by Counsellor Callaghan, and joins Shanbally; where English lives is about one-eighth of a mile from Shanbally.

DANIEL KEEFE, produced a second time.

Knows John Butler; saw him in October, 1764; did not see him the 28th or 29th of October, 1764.

GERALD FITZGERALD, for the prisoner.

Knows John Butler; saw him in October, 1764, in a fever, at his own house, from the 3rd to the end of the month: cannot say he saw him the 28th; saw him November the 2nd, before he was able to go out.

RICHARD TRAVERS, sworn.

Knew Thomas Magrath in October, 1764; saw him the 28th at witness's father's house, and from about eight at night till four o'clock in the morning on Sunday; was drinking all the time in the company; knows not whether he went out; did not stay out an hour at a time; knows not where English lives; Shanbally about four miles from Clogheen.

JOHN BRIEN, sworn.

Lives at Shanbally, is a dancing-master; knew John Bridge; believes him alive; never saw him since the 24th of October, 1764, nor was he in the country since; met him in a forge the 24th at Barncourt; called for the sledge, and turned some shoes; called witness aside, and desired that he would keep what he told him secret, for that he was going out of the kingdom, and that if he returned, he would return his favour.

LAWRENCE HANGLIN, sworn.

Knew John Bridge; saw him at Anglesborough,

in the county of Limerick, 28th of October, 1764, about eleven miles from Clogheen; was surprised at his knocking at his door three hours before day; he said he was going to sea to avoid the Light-horse; went with him through Mitchelstown; parted from him beyond the town, and took leave of him beyond it; he could read and write, but he never wrote to him, or to any one that he could hear; told him he would go to Cork or Kinsale, to look for a ship; believes Mr. Beere is to be believed on his oath.

JOHN LANDREGAN, sworn.

Worked all Saturday night; worked Sunday night, till five or six o'clock on Monday morning; begun to work about six on Sunday evening; did not go to bed or to sleep all night; witness went to prepare a stand; in witness's company all night with his wife, maid, and Henderkin, all there; Henderkin went to bed in the work-room above stairs.

Cross-examined.—Did not sleep from Saturday to Monday; lay on Monday night at his father's house; Henderkin went away on Tuesday; saw Henderkin a fortnight ago; did not see him this day or yesterday; did not hear what he swore.

Meighan, on this evidence, being convicted, the same testimony was produced against Father Sheehy. Several of his parishioners offered to come forward as witnesses, to confute the witnesses who had so grossly perjured themselves on the former trial; but Father Sheehy, well knowing they would incur the vengeance of his prosecutors, and relying mainly on the testimony of two witnesses, Messrs. Keating and Herbert, whose characters he thought would secure them from any injury on his account, generously, but unfortunately for him, declined to have several of them called.

One person indeed of his own persuasion, of his own profession, his spiritual superior, he did call on, to speak to his character as a man of loyalty; and this gentleman refused. The cold, dull shade of the Catholic aristocracy, the influence of the friendship

of Lord Kenmare, the fear of the consequences attendant on the perjured informations, which went to implicate Dr. Butler, the R. C. Archbishop of Cashel, in the crime of treason, it is to be feared, prevented this gentleman from coming forward on behalf of a person who had the character of an agitating priest, one who was inimical to tithe proctors and the oppressors of the poor, and most obnoxious to the latter, and their powerful protectors in the commission of the peace.*

The innocence of Father Sheehy was clearly established by one of the witnesses he produced, Mr. Keating, a Catholic gentleman of respectability and fortune, the excellence of whose character, in the words of Mr. O'Connor, formed a striking contrast with that of his prosecutors. But the most astounding act of wickedness that had been yet practised against the life of this doomed man was had recourse to, to deprive him of the advantage which the testimony of Mr. Keating must have been to him, had that testimony been allowed to go unimpeached.

The following account of the extraordinary proceeding of his persecutors to effect their object, is taken from "The Candid Inquiry" of Dr. Curry:— "During his trial, Mr. Keating, a person of known property and credit in that country, giving the clearest and fullest evidence that, on the whole of the night of the supposed murder of Bridge, the prisoner, Nicholas Sheehy, had lain in his house; that he could not have left it in the night-time without his knowledge, and consequently, that he could not be present at the murder, the Rev. Mr. ——— (Hewetson) stood up, and after looking at a paper that he held in his hand, informed the Court, *that he had Mr. Keating's name on his list* as one of those who were concerned in the murder of a sergeant and corporal at New Market, upon which Mr. Keating was

* After Sheehy's execution, the refusal of this gentleman was remembered by one of his relatives: as the corpse was borne past the door of Dr. E., the blood of the innocent man was sprinkled on his door.

immediately hurried away to Kilkenny gaol, where he lay for some time loaded with irons, in a dark and loathsome dungeon. By this proceeding, not only his evidence was rendered useless to Sheehy, but also that of many others was prevented, who came to testify the same thing, but who instantly withdrew themselves, for fear of meeting with the same treatment." As the crime laid to the charge of Mr. Keating was committed in another county, fortunately for him he was not tried at Clonmel. He was brought to trial in Kilkenny. The principal witnesses against him were those who had given evidence on Sheehy's trial; but the jury gave no credit to their testimony, and the prisoner was accordingly acquitted. The purpose, however, of Father Sheehy's prosecutors was effected. The obnoxious priest was deprived of the evidence of a witness which must have established his innocence, if the Rev. Mr. Hewetson had not remembered that "his name was on the list."

In the "Scots' Magazine," of March, 1766, at page 65, this matter is treated as an ordinary occurrence, that called not for a single observation. "On the trial, Father Sheehy produced Mr. Keating, of Tubberett* (Tubrid) as evidence in his behalf, who, before he quitted the court, was, by the Lord Chief Justice's order, taken into custody, being charged with the murder of a sergeant and corporal in the county of Kilkenny. A man of considerable property was taken last Tuesday. Sheehy was hanged, drawn, and quartered, on Saturday morning."

"Herbert," we are told by Curry, "who was a farmer, had come to the assizes of Clonmel, in order to give evidence in favour of the priest Sheehy, (by whom it was pretended bills of high treason had been found against him:) they sent the witness Toohy, (accom-

* Tubrid, in the county Tipperary, four miles from Cahir, on the road to Clogheen, close to the ruins of an old chapel, dedicated to St. Kearn. The Irish historian, Dr. Geoffrey Keating, who was a native and priest of this parish, is buried in Tubrid churchyard: an inscription on an old monument near the ruined chapel, dated 1644, enjoins the reader to pray for the souls of Eugenius Duhuy and Geoffrey Keating, its founders.

panied by Mr. Bagnell,) attended by some of the light horse, to take him prisoner. Herbert, when taken, immediately became an evidence for the Crown, but upon what motive, whether for the sake of justice, the fear of hanging, or the hopes of a reward," is left by Curry to the reader to determine.*

"On the day of his (Sheehy's) trial," we are told by the same author, "a party of horse surrounded the court, admitting and excluding whom they thought proper; while others of them, with a certain ——— (Baronet Sir Thomas Maude) at their head, scampered the streets in a formidable manner; forcing into inns and private lodgings in the town; challenging and questioning all new comers; menacing his friends, and encouraging his enemies. Even after sentence of death was pronounced against him, which one would think might have fully satisfied his enemies, Mr. S——w, (Sparrow,) his attorney, declares, that he found it necessary, for his safety, to steal out of the town by night, and with all possible speed to escape to Dublin."†

If ever affrighted justice might be said to "swing from her moorings," and, passion-driven, to be left at the mercy of the winds and waves of party violence, it surely was in these iniquitous proceedings; and for innocence it might indeed be affirmed that there was no anchorage in the breasts of such a jury, packed as it was for the purpose of conviction, or in the sanctuary of such a court, surrounded by a military force to overawe its functionaries, and to intimidate the advocates and witnesses of the accused. The prisoner was found guilty of the murder of John Bridge, and sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and on the 15th the sentence was carried into execution at Clonmel. The head of the murdered priest was stuck on a spike, and placed over the porch of the old gaol, and there it was allowed to remain for upwards of twenty years, till at length his sister, Mrs. Burke, was allowed to take it

* Candid Enquiry, &c. p. 11.
† Ibid., pp. 9 and 10.

away and bury it with his remains at Shandraghan.

Beside the ruins of the old church of Shandraghan, the grave of Father Sheehy is distinguished by the beaten path, which reminds us of the hold which his memory has to this day on the affections of the people. The inscriptions on the adjoining tombs are effaced by the footsteps of the pilgrims who stand over his grave, not rarely or at stated festivals, but day after day, as I was informed on the spot, while the neglected tomb of the ancestors of the proud persecutor Wm. Bagnell, lies at a little distance unhonoured and unnoticed by them. The inscription on the tomb of Father Sheehy is in the following terms: "Here lieth the remains of the Rev. Nicholas Sheehy, parish priest of Shandraghan, Ballysheehan, and Templeheny. He died March 15th, 1766, aged 38 years. Erected by his sister Catherine Burke, alias Sheehy."

During the Assizes at Clonmel, a menacing letter, addressed to Mr. John Bagnell, was read in Court. The moderation and humanity of that gentleman were highly eulogized, "for having declined to produce the letter until after the passing of sentence, though he had received it during the course of the trials, lest it might be suspected that sanguinary indirect means had been used to the disadvantage of the prisoners." The letter was in these terms:

TO JOHN BAGNELL.

"YOUR parcel of heretic dogs who have taken away Christian innocent lives, for which we will take an hundred lives for every one you take. You took the head of our bishop, who was to be a primate of all Ireland, but we have elected one in his place and will soon *relase* their heads with some of yours.

"I remain your enemy,

"SHAUN MESKILL."

This clumsy fabrication could not for a moment

have imposed on the understanding of any man in Ireland, of ordinary intelligence. The calling of the priest, "their bishop,"—the design of representing Sheehy as a candidate for the primacy,—the privilege claimed by the people of electing a prelate, are sufficient indications of the manufacture of this ingenious device.

When it is remembered that it was not the lives of two men, but those of almost all the leading Roman Catholic gentry of the county, several of the priesthood, and even some of the hierarchy, which were dependant on the credit given to the testimony and sworn informations of these witnesses; it may not be impertinent to the subject, or even unprofitable in our own times, to inquire into their characters, and the means taken by the terrorists of the day, or the suborners of those perjured witnesses, to goad or gain them over to their nefarious purposes.

John Toohy, a horse-stealer, was lying in Kilkenny gaol, under a charge of felony, about a month before the trial of Sheehy in Dublin. The large promises held out to persons who would swear home against the suspected and accused parties, and ensure convictions, came to the knowledge of this felon, and he contrived to get into communication with Lord Carrick and other managers, by whom he was visited and in due time transmitted to Dublin. Having done his work there he was sent back to Clonmel, at first confined in the gaol, and then suffered to go abroad with a fetter-lock on one of his legs. The lock was soon removed, and he was dressed out for the witness table (the customary preparation then of an Irish Crown witness.) Amyas Griffith, surveyor of excise, in his letter to Mr. Toler, speaks of seeing him at this period, "in an elegant suit of new fine clothes, a superfine blue cloth coat, the waistcoat and breeches of black silk," purchased for him in Clonmel at Mr. Lloyd's, by the managers of the prosecution. On the 29th of May, 1767, on the sworn information of John Toohy, made before John

Bagwell, Esq., John Hogan of Clonmel, cabinet-maker, was held to bail, " for and on account of his being charged with the assaulting John Toohy;" David Cunningham Skinner, and Hill Thompson, pewterer, entering into recognizances for his appearance at the next Assizes. On the 27th June, same year, an indictment against John Cawdy and eight others, for assaulting John Toohy, quashed.

On the 20th of August, 1767, on the sworn information of John Toohy, before John Bagnell, Esq., John and Edmund Cody (father and son), of Orchardstown, were held to bail, " for having with several other persons, in a riotous and unlawful manner, assembled on the lands of Rathronan, in the said county, on the 15th of August, having then and there in a violent and outrageous manner insulted, assaulted, beat, struck, bloodshed, battered, and abused the said John Toohy, giving him several wounds in his head and other parts of the body, through means of which he lies in eminent danger of life; and for having then and there expressed and declared, that if they had Sir Thomas Maude, John Bagnell, Esq., and the Rev. Mr. Hewetson, they would serve them in the same manner."

Thomas Duning, of Kilmore, and Patrick Kennedy, entering into recognizance for their appearance at the next Assizes.

At the prosecution of Roger Sheehy, in the year following, he was again brought forward as a witness. The prime sergeant pronounced him perjured, and the Judge desired the jury to acquit the prisoner. Griffith states he survived a few years, and died of leprosy. Mary Dunlea, *alias* Brady, lived at Rehill, and by her own mother was admitted to be a woman of the worst character. She cohabited with Michael Kearney, the person mentioned in her evidence; and the notoriety of her ill conduct, when residing in the parish of Shanraghan, caused Father Sheehy to denounce her from the altar. It was subsequently to this denunciation she lodged informations against Nicholas, Edmund and Roger Sheehy, the two Burkes, of Ruske, and several others. During the

trials, she was kept at the barracks, her table being furnished from one of the principal hotels in Clonmel, the *Spread Eagle*.

At the general Assizes in Clonmel, August, 1766, true bills were found, on the information of Mary Dunlea, *alias* Brady, against James Kearney and Terence Begley, for "tampering with the said M. Brady, and dissuading her from giving evidence."

Another true bill was found against a woman of her own name for "unlawfully reviling said M. Brady, for giving evidence against Nicholas Sheehy."

Jeremiah Magrath, of Clogheen, the surviving relative of one of her victims, saw her in Clogheen, in 1798. She was then married, or said to be so, to a soldier in a militia regiment, a miserable object, blind of one eye; and was on her way to Cork with her reputed husband, where she met with an untimely end, by falling down a cellar. Griffith states that she died in a ditch, in the county of Kilkenny; but the former account of her end is entitled to most credit.

The boy, Lonnergan, nephew of another informer, was notorious in the country for his depravity. During the trials, he was likewise lodged in the barracks. When his services were dispensed with he changed his name to Ryan, enlisted, and went to Dublin. There he eventually, by a loathsome disease, terminated his career in Barrack-street. A respectable apothecary, of the name of M'Mahon, of Aungier-street, was employed to attend him by a person in authority, and was liberally paid for his attendance.

Another brother of this unfortunate boy, whose informations were used on the same occasion, in the conspiracy of 1766, wandered over the country for some years, and returned to his native place, where he died a natural death.

The origin of John Bridge, the unfortunate man whose name is connected with the earliest incidents in this frightful drama, is involved in equal mystery with the termination of his career. Deserted by his

parents, he was found in infancy on the bank of the river, under the bridge of Clogheen, and was brought up by a man of the name of Henry Biers. He was a simple, harmless, poor creature, of weak intellect; and was accustomed to go about the county amongst the small farmers, with whom he was a favourite, and was looked on by them as a good-natured poor fellow, who having no friend or relatives, had some claim to their kindness. Father O'Leary appears to have been misinformed respecting his character. When the head-quarters of the Earl of Drogheda was at Clogheen, he had been taken up on suspicion of Whiteboyism, or for the purpose of obtaining information from him; he was flogged with great severity, and under that torture made disclosures, true or false, which were supposed to implicate several persons in the neighbourhood of Clogheen. His disappearance has been already stated, and the consequences that ensued from it.

The discovery of the remains of a man alleged to have been murdered, on the trial of the men charged with his murder, it might have been imagined would have been a matter of some importance. But the fact of the parties who swore they had been present at the murder, and interment of the body, having failed to substantiate the latter part of their statement, by the discovery of his remains, was of no advantage to the accused. In the case of the Jews at Damascus, accused of murdering Father Tomaso, a similar circumstance, on the minds of all men, except their barbarous persecutors, had little weight. And yet, in that case, the perjured witnesses went a step beyond their Irish prototypes; they produced fragments of bones, and shreds of clothing, which they attempted to palm off as part of the remains of the murdered priest. The verdict of the civilized world acquitted the persecuted Jews, while the perjured witnesses, the Turkish cadis, and the European partisans of their barbarous persecutors, were execrated as they deserved to be.

The same outrage on humanity and justice in the

case of the unfortunate Christian priest, in our own country, calls for similar reprobation; for there cannot be one measure of detestation for murderous persecution in a distant land, and another for the same wickedness in our own.

"Bridge's body," we are informed by Curry, "was never found, though it was carefully sought for in the two different places in which the witnesses had sworn it was deposited; and though the particular circumstances of his cleft skull, which the same witnesses swore was the cause of his death, would have guided the search, and distinguished his from every other body in the place. Besides, two of Bridge's known intimates, whose veracity was not questioned, positively deposed at the trials of the late convicts, that but a few days before he disappeared, he told them in confidence, that he was then going to quit the kingdom, and took a formal leave of them, desiring them *to keep his departure secret*, and promising that, if he should ever see them again, he would reward their kindness."*

Many years subsequently to his disappearance, Bridge was said to be living in Newfoundland; and in Arthur O'Leary's defence of his conduct during the Munster riots, published in 1787, he alludes to the fact of his existence in these words: "Bridge, a man of no good character, whose dead body could not be found, but whose living body, if report be true, was afterwards seen in Newfoundland. The dead bodies of rogues, who had been murdered in our kingdom, had been afterwards seen living bodies in another, as so many enchanted dragons, watching the Hesperian garden of the temple of Venus, *alias* bullies to a brothel. That this was Bridge's case I cannot affirm; but for the rest, the history of the kingdom is my voucher."†

Seven years after Bridge quitted the country, it is also stated that he was seen by a native of Clogheen in the United States of America. Amyas Grif-

* Dr. Curry's Parallel, &c.

† O'Leary's Defence in answer to the Bishop of Cloyne, p. 20.

fith speaks, in his letter to Mr. Toler, of Bridge's existence in Newfoundland in 1787.

In one of the depositions sworn to by Landregen, one of the Clonmel informers, 15th of March, 1767, before the Rev. Dr. Hewetson, the deponent swears to his being present at the meeting of the Whiteboys on the race-course of Clogheen, on the night of the Earl of Drogheda coming there, at which Father Sheehy proposed to burn the town and massacre the magistrates. That said meeting was held in the spring of 1762, some time before the French took Newfoundland.*

The allusion to Newfoundland is rather singular. The arrival of the troops under the Earl of Drogheda was an event much more likely to recall the date than the capture of Newfoundland; nor is it likely that a man, in the humble rank of the deponent, would have an event of no local interest fresh in his mind five years after its occurrence.

The rumour of Bridge's departure from France, and being then settled in Newfoundland, was much more likely to have reached Ireland, and to have brought the name of that place to the memory of the deponent.†

The reader, I believe, is now in possession of all the data on which the assertion generally received is founded—that John Bridge was living in Newfoundland many years subsequently to the execution of the prisoners convicted of his alleged murder. It now remains to examine what evidence, documentary or traditionary, there may be in support of the opinion, that he met in his own country with an untimely end.

The testimony of Toohy, Dunlea, and Lonergan, is not only evidently at variance with truth in the most material matters, but obviously contradictory with that of each other, and altogether utterly unworthy of credit. But even without the broad marks

* Musgrave's Rebellion; Appendix; quarto edition, p. 3.

† St. John's, in Newfoundland, was taken by the French 24th May, 1762, and re-taken by the English 18th September following.

of perjury blazoned on its face, there is enough to render it suspected in the character of the witnesses —one charged with felony; another excommunicated by the minister of her religion; the last, whose vicious habits had rendered him notorious as ill-reputed in his neighbourhood, transformed by the magic influence of a Crown prosecutor's liberal expenditure, from a vagrant in rags and tatters, to a witness in fine clothes, a long-tailed coat, and in high-heeled shoes, duly kemped and drilled, to go before a jury. Dr. Curry, in his pamphlet, the "Candid Enquiry," alludes to a letter which Sheehy wrote to Major Sirr the day before his execution, wherein he admitted that the murder of Bridge had been revealed to him in a manner he could not avail himself of for his own preservation; and that the murder had been committed by two persons, not by those sworn to by the witnesses, and in a different manner to that described by them. Curry admits this letter was written by Sheehy, but he does not insert it; and in his subsequent work, the "Review of the Civil Wars," there is no mention at all made of it in his account of these proceedings. Having obtained a copy of this letter, the first point to ascertain was, if the letter was written by Sheehy, or fabricated by his enemies. The result of my enquiries was to convince me that the letter was genuine. It was declared to be so by the successor of Father Sheehy, in the parish of Clogheen, (Mr. Keating,) to Mr. Flannery, another clergyman, in the same place, at a later period. Dr. Egan, who then administered the diocese, had likewise declared it to be genuine. The present parish priest of Clogheen, a relative of Edmund Sheehy, believes it to be genuine. One of the Roman Catholic clergymen of Clonmel, who takes the deepest interest in the fate of Father Sheehy, has no doubt of its authenticity. Every surviving relative of either of the Sheehys with whom I have communicated entertains the same opinion; and lastly, I may observe, the document bears the internal evidence of authenticity in its style and tone.

The following is a literal copy of this document:—

"TO JOSEPH SIRR, ESQ., DUBLIN.

"*Clonmel, Friday morning, March* 14, 1766.

"DEAR SIR,

"To-morrow I am to be executed, thanks be to the Almighty God, with whom I hope to be for evermore: I would not change my lot with the highest now in the kingdom. I die innocent of the facts for which I am sentenced. The Lord have mercy on my soul. I beseech the great Creator that for your benevolence to me he will grant you grace to make such use of your time here that you may see and enjoy him hereafter. Remember me to Mr. Waite, the Lord Chancellor, Speaker, and the Judges of the King's Bench; may God bless them! Recommend to them, all under the same charge with me; they are innocent of the murder; the prosecutors swore wrongfully and falsely; God forgive them. The accusers and the accused are equally ignorant of the fact, as I have been informed, but after such a manner I received the information that I cannot make use of it for my own preservation; the fact is, that John Bridge was destroyed by two alone, who strangled him on Wednesday night the 24th October, 1764. I was then from home, and only returned home the 28th, and heard that he had disappeared. Various were the reports, which to believe I could not pretend to, until in the discharge of my duty one accused himself of the said fact. May God grant the guilty true repentance and preserve the innocent! I recommend them to your care. I have relied very much on Mr. Waite's promise. I hope no more priests will be distressed for their religion, and that the Roman Catholics of this kingdom will be countenanced by the Government, as I was promised by Mr. Waite would be the case if I proved my innocence. I am now to appear before the Divine tribunal and declare that I was unacquainted with Mary Butler, *alias* Casey, and John Toohy, never having spoken to or seen

either of them to the best of my memory, before I saw them in the King's Bench last February. May God forgive them and bless them, you, and all mankind, are the earnest and fervent prayers of

"Dear Sir,

"Your most obliged, humble Servant,

"NICHOLAS SHEEHY."

The witnesses stated that the murder was committed the 28th October, 1764. Father Sheehy says it was on the 24th. The number of persons implicated in it by the former was considerable, by the latter two only were concerned in it. In the mode of committing it the discrepancy of the accounts is no less obvious.

The question arises, when was this confession made to Father Sheehy, and with what object? Amyas Griffith speaks of the disclosure thus made under the veil of confession as "no new method of entrapping credulous priests," and that it was adopted in this instance after the trial; of the latter statement no proof is adduced. The shortness of the time between his conviction and execution, and the inability expressed of availing himself of the knowledge given him "for his own preservation," militate against the probability of this disclosure being made subsequently to the trial.

Curry treats the disclosure as a snare laid by the enemies of Sheehy for their own purposes. The purposes to be served by having recourse to the infamous proceeding of deceiving the unwary priest, and of making the functions of his sacred office subservient to the designs of his enemies, could only be the following. If resorted to previously to trial, by the disclosure of the alleged murder to deter him from adducing evidence of the man's existence; or, if subsequently to it, to leave it out of his power to make any declaration of his ignorance of the fact of his alleged death.

The attempt for the accomplishment of either object was not too unimportant for the character

of the prosecutors; nor can it be deemed too infamous to be beyond the compass of their wickedness, when we find them holding out offers of pardon to their three next victims on condition of their making a declaration that "the priest" in his last solemn protestation of innocence "had died with a lie in his mouth."

Curry expresses an opinion that Father Sheehy mistrusted the statement made to him, and grounds that opinion on the evidence produced on his trial in proof of Bridge's proposed departure out of the kingdom at the period of his disappearance. There is no appearance of mistrust, however, in the statement made to him in his reference to it in his letter to Major Sirr. The fact of Bridge's intention to go abroad, and of having gone to certain persons to take leave of them on the last day he was seen living, is unquestionable. That fact is within the knowledge of persons yet in existence. The same obligations which prevented Father Sheehy from availing himself on his trial of the knowledge communicated to him, precluded him from giving any specific information to those witnesses whose testimony went to the establishment of the fact of Bridge's intended departure, and of the belief in his existence.

The information he (Sheehy) gave Major Sirr was no less vague than the rumour of Bridge's death consequent on his disappearance, on which superstructure of suspicion the whole story of the mode and manner of his death was built by the witnesses for the prosecution. In fact, neither the accusers nor the accused, of their own knowledge, knew anything of that event.

The whole frightful catalogue of crimes and calamities attendant on these proceedings at Clonmel, are to be traced to the barbarous custom of inflicting torture for the purpose of extorting confessions of guilt and disclosures, on which criminal proceedings are to be grounded against obnoxious parties.

The atrocious practice to which I allude, which literally reduced the Irish at a later period to the

out as the person suspected of having stolen it. The double infamy now attached to Bridge's character of being an informer and a sacrilegious person. He was advised to leave the country; and at length he made preparations to do so. On their completion, he took leave of his acquaintances; and the last time he was seen by them was on his way to the house of an old friend of his, named Francis Bier, for the purpose of taking leave of him. It was known that he intended calling on another of his acquaintances, named Timothy Sullivan, a slater. Sullivan and a man of the name of Michael Mahony, better known in his neighbourhood by the name, in Irish, for "wicked Michael," lived at Knockaughrim bridge; *he fell into their hands, and he was murdered by them.* No other human being had act or part in this foul deed. Mahony's flight, and his reasons for it, were known for a long time only to his friends. The body of the murdered man was thrown into a pond at Shanbally.

Mahony fled the country; Sullivan remained, and lived and died, unsuspected by the authorities, though not unknown as the murderer to one individual at Clogheen; an innkeeper of the name of Magrath, who had been one of the innocent persons sworn against by Mary Dunlea, and had undergone a long imprisonment in Clonmel jail. On his liberation, then suffering under a rheumatic complaint, the effect of his confinement, seeing Sullivan passing his door, Magrath said to a person who stood by him, "There goes the man to whom I am indebted for these aching bones." Sullivan turned pale as ashes, quickened his pace and took no notice of the words, which had been spoken sufficiently loud, and with the intention that they should be heard by him.

The persons by whom this account was given, appeared to be ignorant of any communication respecting the murder made by Father Sheehy to Major Sirr. The circumstance of the coincidence of both accounts, with respect to two persons only having been engaged

in the commission of the crime, deserves attention. By one of those guilty persons, Sheehy says the statement was made to him.

Sullivan was a protestant; Mahony, a catholic. If the crime was perpetrated and revealed by either, the disclosure must have been made by Mahony.

From the time of Bridge's disappearance till this disclosure in the Confessional, Father Sheehy states that various rumours were afloat, but which of them to believe he knew not. In concluding this part of the subject I have only to observe, if the shadow of a doubt remains respecting the fate of Bridge, none whatever can be entertained of the innocence of those who were the victims of one of the foulest conspiracies on record. If these sanguinary proceedings were instituted with a view rather to retaliation of an indiscriminate character, than to the vindication of the law by the punishment of guilt in the person of the actual culprit;—had they been adopted where the commission of a crime was known, but no clue was obtained to the perpetrators of it; and it was deemed sufficient, not for the ends of justice, but for the purpose of striking terror into any portion of a community or a class to which the guilty party might be suspected to belong, to take life for life; on whatever plea of expediency or policy—under whatever legal forms such prosecutions were carried on—the parties to them were the worst of criminals, and their practices the most injurious of all possible outrages on justice to the laws of their country, and to the habits of those who lived under them.

The author of a virulent book, called "Strictures on Plowden's Historical Review," in our own days, has had the courage to revive the wicked calumny against the unfortunate Sheehy. At page 89, he states, "One of the most active fomenters of these riots was a priest, of the name of Father Nicholas Sheehy, who having been tried at the Court of King's Bench, in Ireland, and acquitted for want of sufficient evidence, returned to the south; and emboldened by his escape, continued his treasonable practices without

the reserve and caution he had at first adopted. He was, therefore, a second time apprehended, was tried at the assizes at Clonmel, found guilty upon the clearest evidence, and executed accordingly." The writer of the above well knew that no one acquainted with the proceedings in Sheehy's case could possibly doubt his innocence. He, therefore, deliberately falsifies those proceedings, and then draws his deduction of the guilt of Sheehy from them. The unfortunate Sheehy returned to the south, after his trial in Dublin, a prisoner in close custody; and was, on his arrival in Clonmel, forthwith lodged in jail. The interval between his trial in Dublin, on the 10th of February, and that in Clonmel, on the 12th of March, namely, a month and two days, was spent in durance, either in the safe keeping of Town-major Sirr or in Clonmel jail.

His throwing off "that reserve and caution which he had at first adopted," emboldened by *his escape* at Dublin, necessarily implies that he was at large in Clonmel subsequently to his first trial, and that sufficient time elapsed for him to become involved in new treasonable practices. Yet we find, in the brief interval between the two trials, the unfortunate Sheehy was in the hands of his enemies—it would be a perversion of language to say, of justice.

Why are these acts of barbarity to be recalled? If the day is going, or gone by, for the perpetration of them, to what cause are we to ascribe the happy change, but to the free expression of the disgust and indignation which the exposure of them calls forth? Is the day gone by for their defence? The publication of the book I have just referred to, so many years after the death of the victim of Protestant-ascendency fanaticism, is an answer to that question. The passions of the writer were not engaged in the matter he took up, like those of the actors in that persecution. But the old interests of ascendency were to be sustained, and it is good for the people of England to know by what means they have been upheld, and are defended even at this day, by their

Irish organs; and would be promoted, if happily a change had not come over the policy of the Government.

The old maxim, "*divide et impera*," can be no longer applicable to its interests. To rule with justice, can now be the only policy a Government can sanction with any prospect of security for itself, or the people will submit to at the hands of any party that may be in power.

Ireland, thank God, can no longer be governed for the benefit of a class, and without regard to the rights, interests, or feelings of the great body of the community.

Mr. Taylor, in his "History of the Civil Wars," states, that Sheehy had been frequently tried for "acting as a Popish priest," an offence then punished with transportation; but evidence sufficient for his conviction could not be obtained. The imputed crime, however, involved consequences which left the accused subject to penalties of greater severity even than transportation, as the following references will show.

By the 9th of William III., passed 1697, it is declared, that "all Popish archbishops, bishops, vicars general, deans, jesuits, monks, friars, and all other regular Popish clergy, shall depart out of the kingdom before the 1st day of May, 1698," on pain of transportation; and any person so transported returning again into the kingdom, shall be adjudged guilty of high treason.*

This Act not being thought sufficiently stringent, in 1703 another was passed, to be in force for fourteen years, in the second year of Anne, enjoining increased diligence in apprehending Popish priests returning into the kingdom. In 1709, previous to the expiration of this Act, by another statute, it was declared perpetual.

This Act extended the penalty of treason to "any person of the Popish religion, who shall publicly teach school, or shall instruct youth in learning in

* Irish Statutes, vol. iii., p. 340.

any private house within this realm." And if such person acted as tutor or usher in any Protestant school not having subscribed the oath of abjuration, the penalty of ten pounds shall be imposed for such offence.* By the 19th clause of this Act, Popish parish priests are presumed to exist in the realm, "having been duly registered;" but if such parish priests shall keep any Popish curate, or assistant, both are to be prosecuted as Popish regulars, the guilt of which is high treason.

The 28th clause provides for rewarding informers for discovering and convicting Popish clergy. Fifty pounds for every archbishop, bishop, or other person exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction, twenty for each regular and each secular clergyman, and ten pounds for each schoolmaster, usher, &c., to be levied on the popish inhabitants of the county, "in such manner and on such persons as money for robberies by a late Act against tories, robbers, and rapparees is to be levied."†

In 1704, the total number of popish clergy returned, pursuant to the Act for registering Popish priests, was ten hundred and eighty in the whole kingdom, but the number of priests clandestinely officiating must have been still very considerable. The statutes enacted at different epochs against them, and the frequent denunciation of them in the Commons, afford sufficient proof of the fact.

March 17th, 1705, the Irish Commons voted, "That all magistrates and other persons whatsoever, who neglected or omitted to put the penal laws into due execution, were betrayers of the liberties of the kingdom."

In June, of the same year, they denounced such persons as "enemies to Her Majesty's Government," and they also resolved that "prosecuting and informing against Papists, *was an honourable service to the Government.*"

These barbarous Statutes were the law of the

* Irish Statutes, vol. i., p. 198.
† Ibid., vol. iv., p. 200.

land during the ministry of Father Sheehy, as an assistant or curate (for as such he must have acted before he could have been preferred to a parish, and have officiated as a parish priest "duly registered.")

While thus secretly officiating, not being duly registered, he was subject to prosecution for treason; and the penalty of that crime was to be hanged, drawn, quartered, beheaded, and attainted, entrails to be burnt, and head and quarters, at the King's disposal, to be spiked or gibbeted. The priest of Clogheen was ill-suited for his time. Mr. Taylor, in his excellent history, truly describes him as a man of strong, generous feelings, and full of noble sympathy for the injured and oppressed; qualities that were long deemed treasonable in Ireland.

The first disposition to relax the rigour of the penal laws was shown in 1762. The faction saw with alarm the signs of the downfal of their odious influence and power. The proposed measure of enabling Catholics to lend money on mortgage or landed property, was vigorously opposed by them. It passed, however, and was transmitted to England, but so great was the power of the faction even there, that the bill was never returned. It became necessary to the argument of the ascendency party against any relaxation of the penal code, that the cry they had raised should be kept up, and that the Catholics on any occasion of public tumult or discontent, should be held disaffected to England, and in amity or alliance with the French.

These are the old chimes of ascendency for two hundred years, change after change has been rung upon them, and they still are pealed in our ears by the same faction, for the same objects, and with the same unchristian spirit.

An attempt on a large scale was made to implicate the Roman Catholic gentry of Tipperary in the alleged Papist plot of 1766, after the necessary arrangements were made for the conviction of Father Sheehy.

The rescue of some prisoners in the county of

The same wretches who were produced on the former trial, John Toohy, Mary Brady, *alias* Dunlea, and John Lonergan, were brought forward on their trials; and two new approvers, Thomas Bier and James Herbert, to support the sinking credit of the old witnesses.* Herbert was the man who had come to the former assizes to give evidence for the priest, and who, to prevent his appearance, had been arrested on a charge of high treason, lodged in jail, and, by the dextrous management of the prosecutors, was now transformed into a Crown witness.

Bier was included in the indictment of the prisoners, but had saved his life by turning approver. Previously to the arrests of Edmund Sheehy, Buxton, and Farrell, he sent notice to them that their lives were in danger, and he recommended their making their escape. They had the temerity, however, to rely on their innocence, and they paid, with their lives, the penalty of their folly. The evidence for the prosecution in no material respect differs from that brought forward on the trials of Meehan and Nicholas Sheehy. A detailed narrative of it will be found in the "Gentleman's and London Magazine" for April, 1766. It is needless to weary the reader with its fabrications. It is sufficient to say, the evidence of these witnesses was all of a piece, a tissue of perjuries clumsily interwoven without a particle of truth, or a pretext for regarding the reception of it as the result of an imposition on the understanding.

The principal witness, whose testimony Mr. Sheehy relied on for his defence, was a Protestant gentleman, Mr. James Prendergast, "perfectly unexceptionable," says Curry, "in point of character, fortune, and religion."† This gentleman deposed, "That on the day

* 13th August, 1768, at the Clonmel assizes, Bier, up to that time, retained in the service of the Tipperary persecutors, was called to plead to the indictment preferred against him several years before, for the murder of Bridge, when he pleaded the King's pardon, and being used out as a witness, he was paid off. This unfortunate man, driven by terror into the commission of so many crimes against innocent men, died a natural death at Bruges.

† Review of the Civil Wars.—Curry, vol. ii. p. 279.

and hour on which the murder was sworn to have been committed—about or between the hours of ten or eleven o'clock on the night of the 28th of October, 1764—Edmund Sheehy, the prisoner, was with him and others in a distant part of the country. That they and their wives had, on the aforesaid 28th of October, dined at the house of Mr. Joseph Tennison, where they continued till after supper, which was about eleven o'clock, when he and the prisoner left the house of Mr. Tennison, and rode a considerable way together, on their return to their respective homes. That the prisoner had his wife behind him, and when they parted, he (Mr. Prendergast) rode direct home, where, on his arrival, he had looked at the clock, and found it was twelve exactly. That as to the day of their dining with Mr. Tennison (Sunday, the 28th) he was positive, from this circumstance, that that day following was to be the fair of Clogheen, where he requested that Mr. Sheehy would dispose of some bullocks for him, he (Mr. Prendergast) not being able to attend the fair."* This was the evidence of Mr. Prendergast. Another witness for the prisoner, Paul Webber, of Cork, butcher, swore, that he saw Mr. Sheehy at the fair of Clogheen, on the 29th of October, 1764, and conversed with him respecting Mr. Prendergast's bullocks, which he subsequently bought of Mr. Prendergast, in consequence of this conversation with Mr. Edmund Sheehy. Another witness, Thomas Mason, shepherd to the prisoner, confirmed the particulars sworn to by Mr. Prendergast, as to the night and the hour of Mr. Sheehy's return home from Mr. Tennison's house.

Bartholomew Griffith swore, that John Toohy, his nephew, had falsely sworn, on the trial, that the clothes he wore on the trial had been given to him by him (Griffith). That Toohy, on the 28th and 29th of October, 1764, was at his house at Cullen.

One of the grand jury, Chadwick, volunteered his evidence to blunt the testimony of Griffith. He

* A Candid Enquiry, p. 13.

It is not undeserving of notice to see how the intelligence of proceedings of this kind was received in England. In the "Gentleman's Magazine" for June, 1766, page 289, we find the following notice of those trials:—"At the Clonmel Assizes, Father Sheehy, James Buxton, Edmund Sheehy, James Farrell, otherwise called Buck Farrell, a young fellow of good family—all tried for the murder of John Bridge, who had given information, and being a Whiteboy had been arrested, and severely punished by a court-martial, had informed against them in revenge."

This was all the information respecting these frightful proceedings that it was deemed necessary to give the people of England.

A memorial was drawn up by Edmund Sheehy, and addressed to the Judges who presided at the trial; and the following copy is taken from the original draft:—

"To the Right Honourable Lord Chief Justice Clayton, the Honourable Edmund Malone, and Godfrey Hill, Esq.,

"The humble petition of Edmund Sheehy, an unhappy prisoner under sentence of death in his Majesty's gaol at Clonmel;

"Most humbly sheweth,

"That at the last Commission of Oyer and Terminer and gaol delivery, held at Clonmel, the 11th of April inst., your petitioner was convicted of the murder of John Bridge, and accordingly received sentence to be executed the 3rd of May next.

"That your petitioner was transmitted from the city of Kilkenny to Clonmel on Friday, the 4th of April instant, four days only before the said commission of gaol delivery was opened.

"That from the short time your Petitioner had to prepare for his trial, which he apprehended was by order postponed until the next summer assizes, and the confusion he was in, he was not able to procure all his material witnesses to attend on said trial, or to make that just defence that he would have been

able to make, if he had more time to prepare for it, which is manifest from the want of recollection in Travers, the butcher, produced on behalf of your Petitioner, who, on the very next day after the trial, perfectly recollected, and is now ready to swear he saw your petitioner and the bullocks at the fair of Clogheen. Nor had Mr. Tennison sufficient time to recollect himself, supposing him quite free from the influence of those who managed the prosecution, who were the said Tennison's allies; circumstances that did not appear to your Lordship and Honours, of whose mercy, humanity, and justice your Petitioner has a due sense, which he shall retain unto death, whatever his fate may be.

"That your Petitioner has a wife and five small children, the eldest about nine years old, who, together with an aged father and three sisters, principally depend upon your Petitioner's industry, as a farmer, for support.

"That your Petitioner forbears stating the nature and circumstances of the evidence which appeared upon your Petitioner's trial, but refers to your Lordship and Honours' recollection thereof. However, from the nature of your Petitioner's defence, in part supported by the positive evidence of James Prendergast, Esq., who is a gentleman of unexceptionable good character, and of a considerable fortune, notwithstanding the prejudices that were entertained by some against the persons who were to be tried; your Petitioner, from the evidence and a consciousness of his own innocence, entertained hopes that he would have been acquitted. But in regard that he was found guilty,

"Your Petitioner most humbly implores your Lordship and Honours to take his unhappy case and the character of the several witnesses into consideration, and to make such favourable report of your Petitioner and his family's case to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant as to your Lordship and Honours shall seem meet.

"And he will pray.

"EDMUND SHEEHY."

"Notwithstanding," Curry states, "that frequent and earnest solicitations were made by several persons of quality in the favour of the prisoners; who, being persuaded of their innocence, hoped to obtain for them, if not a pardon, at least, some mitigation of their punishment, by transportation or reprieve;—the chief and most active of these worthy personages, was the Right Honourable Lord Taafe, whose great goodness of heart, and unwearied endeavours on all occasions to save his poor countrymen, add new lustre to his nobility, and will be for ever remembered by them with the warmest and most respectful gratitude;—it is no wonder that their solicitations were vain, for the knight (baronet) so often mentioned (Sir Thomas Maude), Mr. ——, &c., had been before with the Lord Lieutenant, and declared that, if any favour were shown to these people they would follow the example of a noble peer, and quit the kingdom in a body. The behaviour of the prisoners at the place of execution was cheerful, but devout, and modest, though resolute. It was impossible for any one in their circumstances to counterfeit that resignation, serenity, and pleasing hope which appeared so strikingly in all their countenances and gestures. Conscious of their innocence, they seemed to hasten to receive the reward prepared in the next life, for those who suffer patiently for its sake in this."*

In the "Gentleman's and London Magazine," of May, 1766, there is "an authentic narration of the death and execution of Messrs. Sheehy, Buxton, and Farrell, with their declarations attested and carefully compared with those in the hands of Mr. Butler, subsheriff of the county Tipperary, who received them from these unfortunate people at the place of execution."

These documents I have likewise compared with copies of the same declarations, furnished me by some of the surviving friends of these unfortunate gentlemen; and, except in the omission of some names, I find no material difference.

* A Candid Enquiry, pp. 13, 14.

" The Sheriff, who proceeded with decency, called upon the prisoners early in the morning of the 3rd instant, so as to leave the gaol of Clonmel for Clogheen, about 6 o'clock, to which place he was attended by the regiment of light dragoons, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Harcourt, and two companies of Armiger's foot: these the commander had previously made ready for the purpose, by an order from Government. Edmund Sheehy and James Buxton were put on the same car, James Farrell on the next, and the executioner on another, with his apparatus, and the gallows so contrived as to be immediately put together; they thus proceeded in awful procession to Clogheen, where they arrived about twelve o'clock, the distance being above eleven miles.

" In the most open part of the village the gallows was erected, and that in a very short time, while the prisoners remained at a small distance in devotion with their priest, for about two hours, when it was thought necessary to execute the sentence the law of their country had doomed them to suffer. They were then all three put upon one car, and drawn under the gallows, where after remaining some time, they were tied up, and in that situation each read his declaration, and afterwards handed it to the Sheriff.

" Sheehy met his fate with the most undaunted courage, and delivered his declaration with as much composure of mind, as if he had been repeating a prayer; when this awful scene was finished, they were turned off, upon a signal given by Sheehy, who seemed in a sort of exultation, and sprung from the car; he was dead immediately; and after the criminals had hung some time, they were cut down, and the executioner severed their heads from their bodies, which were delivered to their respective friends.*

" Sheehy's intrepid behaviour, set off by an engaging person, attracted much pity and compassion

* The statement is incorrect with respect to the heads of Buxton and Farrell.—R. R. M.

from all present; but the most oppressive part of this tragic scene yet remains to be told, when I say that Sheehy has left a widow with five children to bemoan his unhappy fate, Buxton three, and Farrell, who had not been married more than three months, has left his wife pregnant. They were all buried the evening of that day, as particularly requested by themselves, where we hope they rest, having made atonement for their crimes; and let not the imputation of the fathers' misfortunes be remembered to the prejudice of their families.

"Your constant reader, &c.

"*Cashel, May 28th*, 1766."

"THE DYING DECLARATION OF MR. EDMUND SHEEHY:—

"As I am shortly to appear before the great tribunal of God, where I expect, through the passion and sufferings of my Redeemer, to be forgiven the many crimes and offences, which I have committed against so great and merciful a God, I sincerely forgive the world, I forgive my judges, jury, prosecutors, and every other who had a hand in spilling my innocent blood; may the great God forgive them, bless them, and may they never leave this world, without sincerely repenting, and meriting that felicity which I hope, through the wounds of Christ, soon to enjoy.

"I think it incumbent, as well for the satisfaction of the public, as the ease of my own mind, to declare the truth of every crime with which I was impeached, from the beginning to the day of my conviction.

"*First.* The meeting at Kilcoran, sworn by James Herbert, and the murder of John Bridge, sworn to by him, and the rest of the informers.

"*Second.* The meeting at Ardfinan, swore by Guinan in October, 1763, and several other meetings and treasonable practices, at all which I was sworn to be present as the principal acting person.

"*Third.* That I had a hand in burning John

Fearise's turf, and extirpating his orchard, taking arms from soldiers, *burning Joseph Tennison's corn*, levelling walls, and many other atrocious crimes against the peace and tranquillity of the present happy constitution.

"First. I now solemnly declare, that I did not see a Whiteboy, since the year 1762, and then but once or twice; and that I never was present at the levelling at the Rock of Cashel, or any other wall, or commons in my life, nor even gave counsel or advice to have it done, or ever had any previous knowledge of such intentions, nor do I know to this minute, any one man that was at the levelling of the said wall.

"2ndly. I declare that I never saw Herbert until the day of my trial, and that I never was at a meeting at Kilcoran; never heard an oath of allegiance proposed nor administered in my life to any sovereign king or prince; never knew any thing of the murder of Bridge, until I heard it publicly mentioned; nor did I know there was any such design on foot, and if I had I would have hindered it, if in my power.

"3rdly. The battle of Newmarket, for which I was tried—I declare I never was at Newmarket, nor do I know there was a rescue intended; nor do I believe did any man in the county of Tipperary.

"4thly. I declare that I never meant or intended rebellion, high treason, or massacre, or ever heard any such wicked scheme mentioned or proposed, nor do I believe there was any such matters in view, and if there was, that I am wholly ignorant of them.

"5thly. I declare that I never knew of either French or Spanish officers, commissions, or money paid to those poor ignorant fools called Whiteboys, or a man held in the light of a gentleman connected with them.

"I was often attacked, during my confinement in Kilkenny, by the Rev. Lawrence Brodrick and the Rev. John Hewson, to make useful discoveries, by bringing in men of weight and fortune, that there

was an intended rebellion and massacre, French officers, commissions, and money paid, and by so doing, that would procure my pardon, difficult as it was.

"The day after my trial, Edmund Bagwell came to me from the grand jury, and told me if I would put those matters in a clear light, that I would get my pardon. I made answer, that I would declare the truth, which would not be heard. Sir William Barker's son and Mr. Matthew Bunbury came to me the same evening, with words to the same purpose, to which I replied as before. Nothing on this occasion would give sufficient content, without my proving the above, and that the *priest died with a lie in his mouth*, which was the phrase Mr. Hewson (Hewetson) made use of. I sent for Sir Thomas Maude the day of my sentence, and declared to him the meeting at Drumlemmon, where I saw nothing remarkable, but two or three fellows, who stole hay from Mr. John Keating, were whipped, and sworn never to steal to the value of a shilling during life. I saw Thomas Bier there, which I told Sir Thomas and Mr. Bunbury, and begged of them never to give credit to Herbert, who knew nothing of the matter except what Bier knew.

"I do declare I saw Bier take a voluntary oath more than once, in the gaol of Clonmel, that he knew nothing of the murder; nor do I believe he did. May God forgive him, and the rest of those unhappy informers, and all those who had a hand in encouraging them to swear away innocent lives.

"I further declare, that I have endeavoured, as much as was in my power, to suppress this spirit of the Whiteboys, where I thought or suspected the least spark of it to remain.

"The above is a sincere and honest declaration, as I expect to see God; nor would I make any other for the universe, which must be clear to the gentlemen who offered me my life if I would comply. May the great God forgive them, and incline their hearts to truth, and suffer them not to be biassed, nor hurried on by party or particular prejudices, to

persevere any longer in falsely representing those matters to the best of kings, and to the humanest and best of governments, which I pray God may long continue.

"I die, in the 33rd year of my age, an unworthy member of the Church of Rome: the Lord have mercy on my soul!—Amen! Amen!

"I was informed that Mr. Tennison's corn was burnt by one of his own servants, but accidentally, and that since my confinement; I thought so always.

"Signed by me this 2nd of May, 1766.

"EDMUND SHEEHY.

"Present—James Buxton, James Farrell."

"A COPY OF THE DYING DECLARATION OF JAMES BUXTON, OF KILCORAN, IN THE COUNTY OF TIPPERARY,

for the murder of one John Bridge; John Toohy, and Thomas Bier, prosecutors; God forgive them. Whereas I, the said James Buxton, was arraigned at my trial, for having aided and assisted, and committed many flagrant crimes against his Majesty's law and government since the rise of the Whiteboys, upon the information of Michael Guinan and John Toohy. I thought it proper to disabuse the public, by this declaration, which I make to God and the world concerning my knowledge of these matters.

"First, as to the murder of John Bridge, I solemnly declare in the presence of God, before whose holy tribunal I shortly expect to appear, that I neither consulted nor advised, aided nor abetted, nor had I the least notion of any one that did, to the killing of John Bridge; nor did my prosecutor, John Toohy, ever serve me an hour since I was born; neither did I ever, to the best of my knowledge, lay my eyes on him but one night, on the 18th September last, when he lay at my house and went by the name of Lucius O'Brien. He was pursued next morning by one William O'Brien, of Clonmel, whom he robbed of some clothes two days before, and was taken in Clog-

heen for the same robbery, and said O'Brien's clothes and other things were found upon him, for which he was committed to gaol and then turned approver.

"As to every other thing that Michael Guinan and said Toohy swore against me, I further solemnly declare, in the presence of my great God, that I neither did any such thing, nor was at any such meeting or levelling as they swore against me, except Drumlemmon, and upon the word of a dying man, neither of *them* was there. Nor was any man, upon the same word of a dying man, that was yet apprehended or suffered, in my belief concerned in the murder of Bridge: and that I verily believe and am persuaded that no prosecutor that yet appeared was present, or any way concerned in that murder, though Thomas Bier, God forgive him, swore that he and I were within two yards of John Bridge when he was murdered by Edmund Meehan with a stroke of a bill-hook.

"Secondly. I solemnly declare and protest in the presence of my great God, that I never heard nor ever learned of a rebellion intended in this kingdom, nor never heard of, nor ever saw any French officers, or French money coming into this country, nor ever heard that any merchants supplied or intended to supply any money for the Whiteboys or for any other purpose; nor ever saw, heard, or could discover, that any allegiance was sworn to any prince or potentate in the world, but to his present majesty King George the Third; and I further declare, on my dying words, that I never knew nor discovered, nor even imagined, that any massacre whatsoever was intended against any person or persons in this kingdom. And I declare, in the presence of Almighty God, that I positively believe and am persuaded, that if any of the foregoing treacherous or treasonable combinations were to be carried on, I would have learned or heard something of them.

"Thirdly. That last Lent Assizes, in Kilkenny, where I stood indicted and was arraigned for the

battle of Newmarket, that the Rev. John Hewetson and Rev. Lawrence Broderick tampered with me for six hours and more, setting forth the little chance I had for my life there at Kilkenny; and though I should, that I would have none at all in Clonmel, but that they would write Lord Carrick immediately to procure my freedom, if I would turn approver, and swear to an intended rebellion, treasonable conspiracies, and a massacre against the principal Popish clergy and gentlemen of my county, whose names they had set down in a long piece of paper; but wanted me particularly to swear against Squire Wyse, Philip Long, Dominick Farrell, Martin Murphy, Doctor Creagh, and Michael Lee, and that I should also swear the *Priest Sheehy* died with a lie in his mouth. Likewise, that I was at the battle of Newmarket and received a letter from one Edmund Tobin to be at said battle, and this in order to corroborate the informer Toohy's oath and the oaths of three of the light horse, who swore they saw me there. One in particular swore he broke his firelock on my head. Now, as I expect salvation from the hands of God, I neither received a message or letter, nor heard or discovered that this battle of Newmarket was to occur, nor any circumstance regarding it until it was advertised. And I further declare in the presence of my great God, that I never was nearer this place they call Newmarket than the turnpike road that leads from Dublin to Cork, for I never was two yards eastwards of that road. As to the schemes of the Whiteboys, as far as I could find out in the parish of Tubrid, where I lived, I most solemnly declare before Almighty God nothing more was meant than the detection of thieves and rogues, which the said parish was of late remarkable for; an agreement to deal for tithes with none but the dean or minister whose tithe was of his or their immediate living; as to levelling, that I never found out any such thing to have been committed in said parish of any consequence but one ditch belonging to John Griffin, of Kilcoran; nor was I ever privy to any wall or

ditch that ever was levelled by Whiteboys in the county of Tipperary or any other county.

"I also declare, that I never approved of the proceedings of levellers, and that my constant admonition to every person whom I thought concerned in such vile practices was to desist, for that the innocent would suffer for the guilty.

"Given under my hand this 2nd day of May, and the year 1766. JAMES BUXTON.

"Present—Edmund Sheehy, James Farrell."

THE DECLARATION OF JAMES FARRELL.

"As I am shortly to appear before the great God, where I expect, through the passion of our dear Redeemer, to be forgiven the many crimes and offences which I have committed against so great and just a God, I now sincerely forgive the world in general, and in particular them that have been the cause of wrongfully spilling my blood.

"1st, The crime for which I am to die, is the murder of John Bridge, and swearing at Kilcoran.

"2ndly, The burning of Joseph Tennison's corn, John Fearise's turf, and all other things that belonged to the Whiteboys.

"3rdly, The battle of Newmarket, which I stood a trial for in Kilkenny;—I now declare to the great tribunal, that I am as innocent of all the aforesaid facts which I have been impeached with, as the child unborn, in either counsel, aiding, assisting, or knowledge of said facts. I therefore think it conscionable to declare what the following gentlemen wanted me to do, in order to spill innocent blood, which was not in the power of any man in the world to perform.

"These are the gentlemen as follow: The Revd. John Hewetson, John Bagwell, Matthew Bunbury, Mr. Toler, William Bagnell, Edmund Bagnell, and some of the light horse officers. The day I was condemned they came along with me from the court-house to the gaol, where they carried me into a room,

and told me it was in my power to save my life. I asked them how? If I swore against the following persons, they told me they could get my pardon.

"The people are as follows: Martin Murphy and Philip Long, both of Waterford, and some other merchants of Cork; likewise Bishop Creagh and Lord Dunboyne's brother, and a good many other clergymen; likewise James Nagle, Robert Keating, John Purcell, Thomas Doherty, Thomas Long, John Baldwin, Thomas Butler, of Grange, and Nicholas Lee, with a great many others of the gentlemen of the county and responsible farmers, to be encouraging French officers, enlisting men for the French service, to raise a rebellion in this kingdom, and to distribute French money.

"4thly, If in case they should get a person to do all these things, it would not do without swearing to the murder of John Bridge, to corroborate with the rest of the informers, and strengthen their evidence.

"5thly, I solemnly declare to his Divine Majesty, I was never present at the levelling of a ditch or wall in my life, nor never was at a meeting belonging to Whiteboys in my life.

"6thly, I likewise declare, that I had neither hand, act, nor part, in bringing James Herbert from the county of Limerick, and also declare, to the best of my knowledge, he swore not one word of truth, and, in particular, what he swore against me was undoubtedly false.

"The great God bless all my prosecutors, and all other persons that had hand, act, or part, in spilling my blood innocently, which the Divine tribunal knows to be so.

"Given under my hand, this 30th day of April, 1766. "JAMES FARRELL.

"They also wanted me to swear against Thomas Butler, of Ballyknock, Edmund Doherty, and Philip Hacket.

"In the presence of us:—Edmund Sheehy, James Buxton, Catherine Farrell."

The wretched wife of Edmund Sheehy, immediately after his conviction, proceeded to Dublin, with the hope of procuring a pardon for her husband. His enemies were, however, beforehand with her. Their pernicious influence was exerted in every department at the Castle to frustrate her efforts. They prevailed, as they had hitherto done there, whenever the favour or the anger of the Moloch of their faction was to be propitiated or appeased, by handing over to them their defenceless persecuted victims. Some idea may be formed of the promptitude with which the foul proceedings against these gentlemen were followed up, when it is borne in mind, that their separate trials commenced on the 11th of April; and the following official notice is to be found in the record of these proceedings. "Crown *warrant* for Edmund Sheehy, James Farrell, and James Buxton, given to F. Butler, Sub-Sheriff, 15th April, 1766."

Mrs. Sheehy, on her return to Clonmel, after her fruitless journey, had not even the melancholy satisfaction of finding her husband in prison. On her arrival there in the morning, she learned that he and his companions had been taken from the gaol a short time before, and were then on their way to Clogheen, the place of execution. This wretched woman, worn down with affliction, with the previous conflict between hope and fear, with the shock she had received on her return, at finding her last hope of beholding her beloved husband, and of bidding him farewell, had yet sufficient strength, or the kind of energy which arises from despair, to hurry after that mournful cortège. About half way between Clonmel and Clogheen she overtook it, and rushing forward passed through the soldiers, and threw herself into the arms of her husband.

The scene was one which the few surviving friends of this unhappy couple speak of as causing the very soldiers who surrounded them to weep and sob aloud. This scene took place about two hours before the execution. Before they separated, Sheehy resumed his former apparently unmoved demeanour, and ad-

dressed a few words, expressive of his last wishes, with extraordinary firmness of tone and manner, to his distracted wife. He told her "*to remember she had duties to perform to her God, to herself, to their children, and to his memory;*" and then praying that Heaven might pour down all its blessings on her head, he tore himself from her embrace, and the procession moved on. The officers, soldiers, sub-sheriff, all around them were in tears during this melancholy interview; and at their separation, Sheehy himself, evidently struggling with his feelings, endeavoured to suppress any appearance of emotion, recovered his self-possession, and from that time seemed to be unmoved.

The day before the execution, Mrs. Kearney, an aunt of Edmund Sheehy, applied to one of the officers who was to be on duty the next day, to save his unfortunate family the pain of seeing his head placed on a spike, over the entrance to the gaol, in the High Street, in which it was situated. Her interference was not ineffectual: he told her he had no power to interfere with the civil authorities; but when the head was separated from the body, if any person were in readiness to bear it off, the soldiers probably would not be over-zealous to prevent its removal.

For this act it was wisely thought that the resolution and promptitude of a woman would be likely to prove most successful. Ann Mary Butler, a person devoted to the family, and in her attachment to it incapable of fear and insensible to danger, was selected for this purpose. The head of Edmund Sheehy was no sooner struck from the body, than this woman suddenly forced her way through the soldiers, threw her apron over the head, and fled with it, the soldiers as she approached opening a free passage for her, and again forming in line when the executioner and his attendants made an effort to pursue her, and thus the military prevented their so doing.

The woman, at the place appointed at the cross-roads, near Clogheen, met the funeral, (for the mutilated body had been delivered over to the friends for interment,) the head was put into the coffin, and was

spectable families in the county. Messrs. Keating and Dogherty were persons who moved in the best circles of society, and whose descendants still hold a prominent station in it. The two latter owed their safety to a circumstance which came to the knowledge of one of the friends of Keating, while he was in gaol. One of the dismounted dragoon soldiers, then doing duty in the goal, saw the well-known Mary Dunlea privately introduced into the prison by one of the active magistrates in these proceedings, and taken to a window, where she had an opportunity of seeing Messrs. Keating and Dogherty, without being noticed by them. This was for the purpose of enabling her to swear to persons whom she had never before seen.

On the morning of the trials, the friends of the prisoners keeping a watchful eye on the movements of the same woman, saw her standing in a doorway in front of the dock, and Mr. John Bagwell in the act of pointing out the prisoners. The friend of Keating lost no time in hurrying to the dock, and telling them to change their coats. They did so, and the coats were identified, but not the men. The witness, on being asked to point out Keating, singled out Dogherty: and the manifest ignorance of the witness of the persons of those two prisoners was mainly instrumental in causing all to be acquitted.

The trial of these gentlemen, on account of the great number of witnesses examined, lasted from ten o'clock on Wednesday morning until four o'clock on Thursday morning. The jury, after much deliberation, brought in their verdict, "Not Guilty," upon which the prisoners were enlarged. "Not, however, without the factious, bold, and open censures, and secret threats against the humane and upright Judge who presided at the trial (Baron Mountney),—so enraged were they to find the *last* effort to realize this plot entirely frustrated."*

Curry is mistaken in terming it the last effort. Two other attempts were subsequently made before Judge

* A Parallel between the Plots of 1679 and 1762, p. 39; Saunders' Newsletter, July, 1767.

Edmund Malone, and Prime Serjeant Hutchinson. John Sheehy, John Burke, E. Prendergast and several others, were tried and acquitted on the same charge and evidence. On the 5th of September, 1767, once more "Mr. Roger Sheehy and six others were tried on an indictment of high treason, for being concerned with the Whiteboys, on the testimony of Toohy, "who prevaricating, as we are told by Curry, in his testimony from what he had sworn nearly two years before; Mr. Prime Serjeant desired the jury to give no credit thereto, upon which Sheehy was acquitted."*

Thus terminated a most foul conspiracy against the lives of innocent men. The name of Sheehy's jury became a term of reproach in the south of Ireland, that was applied to any inquiry that was conducted on principles at variance with truth and justice, and which made an indictment tantamount to a conviction.

A passage in Sir Richard Musgrave's history, throws some light on the implication of Mr. Nagle, whose name is mentioned on the list of prisoners at the former trial in March, 1767. "When the enormities," says Sir Richard, "committed by the Whiteboys were about to draw on them the vengeance of the law, and some time before Sir Richard Aston proceeded on his commission to try them, Mr. Edmund Burke sent his brother Richard (who died recorder of Bristol) and Mr. Nagle, a relation, on a mission to Munster, to levy money on the Popish body for the use of the Whiteboys, who were exclusively Papists." The obvious drift of this passage can hardly be mistaken, but as Sir Richard Musgrave appears to have had some misgivings as to the success of the attempt to cast suspicion on the loyalty of Edmund Burke, he added the following passage in a note, in type sufficiently small to afford a chance of its escaping observation; "I have no other proof that these gentlemen were employed by Mr. Burke, than that they declared it without re-

* Freeman's Journal, September 8, 1767.

serve to the persons, from whom they obtained money. In doing so he might have been actuated by motives of charity and humanity."

The extraordinary judgment which fell on the persons who were instrumental to the death of Father Sheehy, are still fresh in the memory of the inhabitants of Clonmel and Clogheen. Several of the jury met with violent deaths, some dragged out a miserable existence, stricken with loathsome and excruciating maladies; madness was the fate of one, beggary the lot of another, recklessness of life and remorse, I believe it may be said with truth, of the majority of them.

This is no overcharged account. On the contrary, it falls short of the reality. One of the jury, named Tuthill, cut his throat; another, named Shaw, was choked; another, named Alexander Hoops, was drowned; the last survivor of them was said to have been accidentally shot by Mr. Sheehy Keating in Rehill-wood, on a sporting excursion. Ferris died mad. One of them dropped dead at his own door. Another, at a gentleman's house, where he spent the night in company with Mr. Pierce Meagher, the brother-in-law of Edmund Sheehy, was found dead in a privy. Dumville, by a fall from his horse, was frightfully disfigured. Minchin, was reduced to beggary; and of all I have heard only of one, named Dunmead, who died a natural death, that was not signally visited with calamities of some kind or other.

Sir Thomas Maude, the ancestor of a noble Lord, died in a state of frenzy, terribly afflicted both in mind and body. In his last moments his ravings were continually about Sheehy, and the repetition of that name became painful to his attendants. Few death-bed scenes, perhaps, ever presented a more appalling spectacle than that of Sir Thomas Maude is described to have been.

Bagwel, of Killmore, was reduced to a state of fatuity for some time before his death. His eldest son shot himself in a packet going over to England,

his property became involved, and a miserable remnant of the wreck of it is all that is now left to one of his descendants living in a foreign land.

How are the proud oppressors fallen! Where now are the Bagwells of Killmore; the Bagnels, and the Carricks? the reverend persecutors, the Brodericks, and the Hewetsons? those magisterial ministers, not of the gospel of peace, but of injustice and fanaticism;—where are their possessions, the honours that are paid to their memories, or bestowed on their descendants? and echo answers, Where?

The catastrophes which we have spoken of may be the results of natural causes, the consequences of violent courses, of unbridled passions leading from one species of excitement to another, and to excesses destructive to reason and ultimately of life itself. The deaths of the persecutors recorded by Lactantius, were not the less evident manifestations of the Divine displeasure, though the earth did not swallow them up, or the thunder-bolt did not fall upon them, and the food and fuel of the disorders which consumed them, were their own violent and headstrong passions. "*Urerentur lentis ignibus*," says Lactantius, and on the same authority by the operation of nature's specific laws, "*datis legibus*," the ends of retributive justice were accomplished.

The success at Clonmel, of the prosecutors in the management of the trials of 1766, which terminated in the conviction and execution of the Sheehys, Farrell, and Buxton, one might have thought would have been sufficient for the satisfaction of Tipperary justice. It would seem, however, that it was not sufficient for the character of the persecutors. These convictions took place in the spring of 1766, long after which, and in some instances upwards of a year after which period, they got the old discredited witnesses to come forward and swear to new depositions, reiterating the former statements; and for the purpose of sustaining their damaged testimony, other miscreants were procured who made similar informations upon oath, the copies of which

are triumphantly paraded in Sir Richard Musgrave's history. All of these, with one exception, are sworn before the Rev. Mr. Hewetson. The date of one is the 24th January, 1768; of another the 15th March, 1767; of another, the 7th of March, 1767. Three other depositions are dated 1766, and were all sworn to, subsequent to the execution of Nicholas Sheehy. The one which is inserted first in Sir Richard Musgrave's work, paraded as the most important corroboration of the former testimony on the trials, is that of an unfortunate reprobate Roman Catholic priest, the Rev. Matthias O'Brien, of the city of Kilkenny.* The new feature in this important deposition is, that "the disorders in the south were originally fomented by foreign agents in conjunction with some Popish bishops, particularly Dr. James Butler, titular Archbishop of Cashel."* * * "That he (Matthias O'Brien) was the coadjutor to the said Archbishop of Cashel; that more than once in his chair of confession he had saved the life of the Rev. John Hewetson, by dissuading the assassins from their bloody purposes, and that the rebellion would have broken out long since, were it not for the zealous and vigilant indefatigable labours of the said John Hewetson and William Bagwell, Esqrs., who, by the activity and spirit they exerted in detecting, apprehending, and bringing to justice, some of the chief leaders of these insurrections, checked and suspended for a time their bad designs."* * * "That he was cognizant of their schemes, because he had been sworn, by the Archbishop (Butler) 'to be true and faithful to the Church of Rome, and to promote its interests, and to be faithful to him, Dr. Butler, for the advancement of the Roman Catholic faith.'" * * * "That the said Archbishop supplied Father Sheehy with sums of money for rebellious purposes," &c., &c., &c. This rev. gentleman deposes, that he was sworn, by his Archbishop, to be faithful to him, &c. He makes no scruple, however,

* The renunciation of the errors of the Church of Rome, on the part of the Popish priest, the Rev. Matthias O'Brien, was announced in the papers of the day subsequently to the date of his deposition.

about breaking that oath; in a previous part of his evidence, however, he accounts for his knowledge of the intention to assassinate Mr. Hewetson by the revelations made to him in the confessional; but he declines to enter into any particulars, and "thinks he cannot, consistent with his obligation as a priest, divulge them."

The certificate of character from the reprobate priest, as to the zeal and activity of the Rev. Mr. Hewetson and his worthy compeers, does not appear to have set their minds at rest as to the opinion (when the frenzy of the time should pass away) that was likely to be formed of their conduct. They had recourse to the old expedient of complimenting one another with addresses and resolutions on the rigour and unceasing vigilance displayed in their proceedings. To one of those addresses, we find the names of those grand jurors appended, who had found the bills of indictment in the preceding cases. In the Dublin *Freeman's Journal* of 22nd April, 1766, we find a resolution of the high sheriff and grand jury of the county Tipperary, expressive of their gratitude to William Bagnel, Esq., one of his Majesty's justices of the peace, "for the spirit and good conduct which he has so eminently shown in bringing to justice numbers of the persons who have so lately disturbed the peace of this county.

(Signed,) "*Daniel Toler, sheriff;* Samuel Alleyn, John L. Judkin, Richard Perry, William Perry, Geoffrey Walshe, John Lloyd, Brook Brazier, Godfrey Taylor, John Toler, Edward Cooke, Thomas Hacket, William Chadwick, *Thomas Maude*, Richard Moore, *John Bagwell*, William Barker, Matthew Jacob, *Matthew Bunbury*, Nathaniel Taylor, Cornelius O'Callaghan, jun., John Carleton, John Power, William Barton."

The grand jury of the county of Dublin could not let pass so favourable an opportunity of eulogizing the energetic measures of their Tipperary brethren.

On the 29th, 1767, "they presented their hearty

thanks to the Right Honourable the Earl of Carrick, Sir Thomas Maude, Bart., the Rev. John Hewetson, John Bagwel, Esq., and William Bagnel, Esq., for their zealous endeavours to bring those delinquents to the punishment they deserved, and to support the laws of their country." Their conviction, they state, was, "that those late riots in the south were fomented as well by foreigners as domestic enemies of our *happy constitution in Church and State*, in order to overthrow the same."

The Earl of Carrick, in reply, assured the grand jury of the county of Dublin, "he heartily concurred with them in thinking that the late troubles in the southern districts were not owing to the pretended grievances, but to a settled intention of overthrowing our present *happy constitution in Church and State.*"

The notes of the cuckoo are not more invariable than those of the party who arrogate to themselves the especial protection of the constitution in Church and State. Happiness, indeed, in those times of terror for the people subjected to that power which domineered over the Government itself, perverted justice, and sacrificed the true interests both of Church and State, to its own inordinate ambition and selfish aims!

These were evermore the notes of the ascendency faction at the fag end of their "life and property" orations at their grand jury dinners and corporation orgies. The best comment on the conduct of this faction, and the absurdity of its bombastic protestations of anxiety for the welfare of religion, or the maintenance of the constitution, is to be found in the significant remonstrance addressed by Lord Halifax in 1762, to the gentry, in the persons of their representatives in Parliament at the close of the session, and evidently in reference to their conduct in the administration of the laws, in the districts which were then the scenes of Whiteboy disturbances. "I doubt not that by justice and lenity, by your influence as men of property, by your authority as magistrates, you will reconcile the minds of the people to peace, civi-

lity, and order, and perfect *that reformation in which, the mere execution of the laws, without the example of those who execute them, must always be defective.*"*

AGRARIAN DISTURBANCES IN THE NORTH.

From 1762 to 1770, the northern counties were the scenes of new risings of the peasantry, under the name of "Oakboys," and "Hearts of Steel." The Oakboys' combination sprang up in opposition to the impositions that were practised on them by the gentry. under the sanction of an oppressive law, which had thrown on the unpaid labours of the poor, to a large extent, the charge of repairing the public roads, and not only those roads, but, according to Plowden, the law was perverted to the employment of their labour on private job roads.

From combining for the purpose of redressing those grievances, they eventually proceeded to the attempt of regulating tithes, and prescribing terms to the proctors and their employers. A military force was sent to the disturbed districts, some lives were lost, the obnoxious Road Bill was repealed, and quiet partially restored.

The Hearts of Steel combination arose in the county Down, about 1762, out of the proceedings of an absentee nobleman, (Lord Downshire,) possessing one of the largest estates in the kingdom, who had adopted a new mode of letting his land when out of lease, by requiring large fines, and reducing the rents in proportion to the latter. The poor occupiers of the land were unable to compete with the wealthy speculators, who had the means of making the required advance of rent in the way of fines, the lands were taken by middlemen, and rack-rents, beggary, and wholesale eviction were the results. The causes of the northern disturbances at this period will be

* Irish Votes, April, 1762, p. 706.

found clearly and succinctly detailed in the following statement, which will bring this introductory notice, already too far extended, to a close.*

"My first recollection of public affairs commenced about 1770, when the country was agitated by the arrest of a farmer in Belfast, on the charge of being a captain of the Hearts of Steel, and, from the neighbours whom I heard in conversation with my father, I remember the following facts, which time and mature age have confirmed in my mind, especially from conversing with many who were then at age.

"The linen trade had flourished in Ulster, and enabled the families who worked at it to live comfortably by renting a house and garden, with grass for a cow, and sometimes for two, from the farmers, and many such families who were industrious became enabled to rent a small farm when a lease fell, or to purchase from others who were emigrating to America, or who, owing to their indolence or profligacy (or both) had fallen into poverty.

"The high rents which the farmers charged to those weavers, (and which they considered fair profits,) taught the landlords the rising value of their land, and in some degrees justified the *cottager* in yielding to the temptation of offering a higher rent to the landlord than what a farmer could pay, but which *he* was enabled to do by the profits arising from his trade. He then divided his farm amongst his chil-

* It would have been an easy matter to have referred to historians of literary eminence for an account of the northern disturbances, but it seemed to me desirable to learn the views and objects of the people engaged in those disturbances from a man of their own rank, and brought up amongst the actors in those combinations. The statement above referred to respecting the Hearts of Steel, &c., was communicated to me by James Hope, of Belfast, a man whose recollection carries him back to the events in question, and on whose vigorous mind their causes and results had left a deep impression. This extraordinary man, now, I believe, verging on his eightieth year, yet in the full possession of all his mental faculties, owes no advantage to birth, fortune, or education, and yet a more singular combination of excellent qualities and of natural endowments I have never met with in any individual similarly circumstanced. This self-educated man has lived for more than half a century by the labour of his own hands, and chiefly at the loom.

dren as they grew up, and few men of that period seemed to consider any provision necessary for their descendants, except placing them on a level with, or, if practicable, above their neighbours, in point of property.

"Education was, of course, in a great measure, neglected, and the richer a man grew, the less he cared about any other knowledge than that which enabled him to extend his worldly possessions.

"Blindly pursuing gain, and overlooking the main point, social security, men bred in the country settled in Belfast, and became wealthy, by means of commerce, chiefly in the provision and linen trades. Having intercourse with people from all parts of the country, and being ever on the look-out where a pound, or even a penny might be made by a bargain, they began to purchase whole town-lands from the head landlords, and to turn large farms into stock farms, to answer the export provision trade, while the people confined to the surface paid more attention to cultivation.

"The unthinking country squire, deceived by his sycophantic agent, (who was paid by the pound for collecting his rents,) imagined that high rents enhanced the intrinsic value of his land; and finding from the face of his books that his nominal rental was increased, and forgetting that the law of nature *will be* obeyed, and that the ocean itself has its bounds; yet feeling that the entail of his estates gave them only to *one* heir, he lent to the crown his surplus income, and thus created, on usury, estates for the younger branches of his family.

"Things went on in this way; but some persons had different views from this, which were deeply impressed on their minds. Finding their necessities increase beyond the power of productive labour, they discussed in the field and at the loom questions respecting their social condition, the privileges of some and the privations of others.

"A man will think what he will not always venture to express, and will say to some what he would

not say to all; and thus an under current of opinion began to run through society, which no act of parliament could reach.

"That class from whose ill-paid labour these means of enjoying the luxuries of life were drawn, brooding over their want and wretchedness, became reckless or vindictive; many, for the sake of better food and clothing and comparative idleness, engaged in the trade of war. But the mass preferred a short life (as they expressed it) and *a merry one* at home, and thus originated the Hearts of Steel.

"In 1775 the linen trade had received its death blow, by the consequences of the American war and the introduction of the cotton manufacture.* The independent spirit of Ulster was now on the decline, and in the towns sordid, selfish speculators began to replace the respectable linen merchants. In the meantime gaudy calicoes and paper money supplanted the precious metals and fine linen. Factories came into vogue. The people had to leave their own firesides; and children of a tender age, girls in the bloom of youth and innocence were transplanted from the cheerful spinning-wheel, under the roof of their parents, to loathsome workhouses or manufactories, in which they breathed an air that was mixed with the fumes of heated oil and cotton dust, and were consigned to the tuition of an overbearing and often vicious manager. At that time a cotton weaver could earn from a pound to thirty shillings a-week, working only four days, with less labour than a linen weaver could now earn five shillings, working six

* Previous to 1775, "the exportation of Irish linen for America had been very considerable; but now this great source of national wealth was totally shut up by an extraordinary stretch of prerogative. Under the pretext of preventing the Americans from being supplied with provisions from Ireland, which, in prejudicing that kingdom served only to favour the adventures of British contractors. This embargo, combined with other causes, produced the most melancholy effects. Wool and black cattle fell considerably in value, as did also land. The tenants in many places were unable to pay the rents, and public credit was almost extinct."—Plowden's History of Ireland, vol. ii. page 171.

days, late and early. The various circumstances in operation produced a change of mind and manners before unknown in the country. But the variety of man's inventions produce effects in every age which, being unforeseen, leave the mass unprepared to accommodate itself to new circumstances, and turn them to advantage, which to some extent accounts for the slow progress of social improvement.

"Observing these evils early in life, I set my mind to contemplate the causes of social derangement, and by thinking rather than reading, to get at some knowledge of the matter. I am still an imperfect reader, and have learned more by the ear than the eye, and by thinking, than talking on any subject. That all human invention has bounds which it cannot pass is as evident as that empires have limits to their duration. Their fate is inherent in the principles upon which they rise, and their durability depends on the energy or inactivity displayed in their operation, or the carrying of them into practical effect. I could never view a system admitting one class to political privileges, and excluding another from them, on account of class or creed, in any other light than an organization at war with the community, and those exclusive privileges but as so many altars on which human sacrifice was daily offered up, perhaps to a greater extent and variety than in any former age on record.

"To return to the Hearts of Steel. A farmer who resided near Belfast, and who was a *ruling elder* in the Presbyterian congregation of Carnmoney, persuaded the majority of his neighbours to allow him to take a lease of the town-land in which he lived from the head landlord, with a promise that they should have every one his farm at the rate it should be obtained by wholesale. They all consented but two or three, who nevertheless shared the fate of the rest; for as soon as the elder got the lease, he raised all their rents, so as to have a considerable profit, besides requiring duty-work, a custom then claimed by the head landlord, on their demesnes.

One of those who had not consented having refused duty-work, a custom then claimed by the head landlords, the elder's son set fire to a hedge of furze, on which some linen clothes of the non-conforming farmer had been put to dry, and this was the first incitement to retaliation. The elder's corn-kiln was set on fire *by his own nephew*, and a shot fired into his house, (but *not* by the nephew,) from which the aforesaid son narrowly escaped. This gave rise to the collection of bands in the districts where the raising of the rents had taken place, and each of these bands conferred the name of 'captain' on a resolute leader. If they went to burn a house, their captain's name was 'firebrand;' if to cut the corn on a farm that had been taken over another's head, (as was their expression,) before it was ripe, his name was 'long-scythe.' He also used to toss out hay to the rain, when the weather was likely to ensure its destruction—his name was 'pitchfork:' and this was the work of the brooding class mentioned above, few of whom were settled inhabitants, and none at all of either principle or character. This was manifest from their taxing the country by threatening letters for money to support their nightly revels. From their deliberate destruction of food, and their cruelty to animals, they were evidently such a class as were afterwards collected into Orange lodges by the landlords, whom they will eventually undermine, as those landlords, in former parliaments, have undermined the true interests of the crown, by involving the country in a debt so overwhelming, that the productive industry of the country is overloaded, and the united interest of king and people sacrificed to sustain their own.

"About this period, several merchants of Belfast had purchased large farms, and turned them into pasture, and these were the men, chiefly, who lost cattle, although the rage ran against every man who held land which he did not *labour*.

"A Belfast merchant, named Gregg, having taken some town-lands in the neighbourhood of Ballyclare,

employed an old woollen weaver, called Gordon, from the county Down, as bailiff and caretaker, who laboured some farms which the occupiers or tenants had left on account of the high rents demanded by Mr. Gregg. When the crops were ripe, no person would help to reap them, and Mr. Gregg prevailed on the officers of a detachment of a Highland regiment, then quartered in Belfast, to send the soldiers out to reap the oats, and cut the hay, which they did; but the country people during the night scattered all to the weather. On a further application, the soldiers were sent to gather it again, but the populace appeared in such numbers, that the officer did not think it prudent to commence the work, and one David Douglas being seen among them, was identified by Gordon and others of Gregg's people. David Douglas being a man respectable in his rank, was accused of being one of the captains of the Hearts of Steel. He then lived in the Templepatrick (Lord Templeton's) estate, and his lease having expired, and the Douglases being stout active men, had made some spirited remonstrances with Mr. Hercules Hyland, his lordship's agent, with respect to the extremely heavy rents he was demanding for the land. His harshness was the more felt when placed in contrast with the late agent, Mr. John Birnie, then lately deceased, and who had been a feeling, conscientious man between landlord and tenant. The Douglases were accordingly pointed out to Waddell, Cunningham, William Wallace, the Greggs, and Stewart Banks, then sovereign of Belfast, as meriting punishment.

"These were some of the merchants before alluded to. David Douglas was arrested in Belfast on a Friday, and on the following Sunday the country people assembled and marched in a body into Belfast, where they attacked the military barracks, where Douglas was confined. The attempt proving unavailing, with the loss of three men killed, viz., William Russell, Andrew Christy, and Robert Walker, and a number of others wounded, they set fire to Waddell Cunning-

ham's house, and threatened the same fate to every house in Belfast belonging to any of the merchant middlemen. Doctor Haliday, an amiable man, who was respected by all classes of society, interposed, and Douglas was released. He gave bail to abide his trial at the assizes, and was acquitted; but others who were tried were not so fortunate, several having been convicted, and one man, named James M'Neill, whose innocence was afterwards fully established, was executed.*

"Men of loose, dissolute character were the chief perpetrators of the depredations of houghing, stabbing, and burning, and, as before mentioned, extorted money by threatening letters, and the people were obliged to submit, until military, both horse and foot, were stationed throughout the country. About this time Hyland was dismissed from the agency, and was succeeded by a Mr. Henry Langford Burleigh, who, by his prudence, firmness, and conciliating manner, joined with his equitable conduct, soon discontinued the dragooning system, and established confidence and good neighbourhood, and the country became perfectly quiet. When I say *quiet*, I do not mean *contented*, for the rise in the price of land, from the necessity of supporting immense armies, both by sea and land, for the aggrandisement of the few, and the oppression of the many, has totally reversed the Christian rule on which all good government should be founded. Manners and customs underwent a revolution.

"People no longer thought of living by the proper exercise of their industry, and the prudent direction of their means, and of labouring, by their example and their efforts, to enlighten and to better the condition of the mass of the people, and enlarge the circle of social comfort. The evils, on the contrary, under which the people laboured, were heightened by the rapacity of the landlords, the habits of settled opposition to improvements of all kinds on the part of the

* Fact.

farmers, and the general dissipation of every class who could procure money by any means, stopping at none, however ruinous, or even criminal to obtain it. The depredations of the Hearts of Oak, Hearts of Steel, and Whiteboys, and their punishment, and the provocation given them by the rapacity of landlords and tithe-mongers, formed the topics of conversation for winter nights, until the American troubles began to be noticed in the *Belfast Newsletter*. That paper was not opposed to the ministry, yet it did not suppress the opinions delivered on that subject by the Earl of Chatham in Parliament. I did not comprehend the subjects then under discussion, but I saw there was a difference of opinion, and began to ponder on the arguments of the old men on the topics which have agitated Europe ever since that period. I fell into the habit of observing the difference between what people *said* and what they *did;* for some of the greatest declaimers against the oppression of the landlords and the clergy, and who considered them as the advocates and abettors of the system which caused so much bloodshed in America, were the least willing themselves to abate one penny in the price of a stone of meal or a bushel of potatoes, or any thing else, in a time of scarcity, that a poor man wanted to buy, at the same time the most careful to pay the least possible rate of wages to their servants. Yet these men would keep up the laudable practice of worship in their families, and read the very texts of Scripture condemning the acts which they would do as soon as they rose from their knees, scarcely allowing their servants any time for rest after their meals, and keeping them to work late and early. The religious and moral instruction to which I had recourse was so much at variance with what I saw in daily practice, that I began to doubt the sincerity of the religious professions in some cases, and at length to question it in very many. Finding my own thoughts vary often on those subjects, I had no human guide on whom I could depend; and my thoughts then (as now) surpassing my powers of expression, I kept them to

myself, and I am only surprised how I have been directed through the labyrinth of a long life, like a weakling on a journey, who keeps his feet only by the staggering of his fellow-travellers.

"When peace was made with America, our intercourse with that country began to prepare the Irish mind for a struggle for its own independence; and in my thoughts the subject had its portion of attention. I observed the pride of property, which is inherent in the aristocratic spirit of our country, was pretty much the same, whether in the man of a million, or in the forty-shilling freeholder. Looking out for its origin, I found it in those arrangements into which men enter for procuring money which they do not earn, or did not inherit, by means of credit. Government set individuals the example of incurring expenses it could not meet without accommodation. The system of borrowing money on bills, and notes, and government securities, was founded on fictitious representations of property. Thus fiction, with regard to capital, supplanted fact and sapped the foundation of our prosperity, and the honesty and independence of our character.

"Force, fraud, and stratagem, are essential to the existence of a state of society which is founded on fictitious credit. I had read of a brutal mark that men were destined to receive in the latter days, on their foreheads and their right hands. I sometimes thought the former mark was intended for the unblushing front of borrowers of other men's money, stock-jobbers, bill-brokers, credit-seekers, &c.; and that the mark on the right hand represented the temporary gain obtained thereby. So I determined, through life, with the blessing of God, to earn my bread by the labour of my hands. By my adherence to this resolve, I have been always able to support myself and my family under difficulties, and contending with disadvantages to which I have been exposed, and which in some instances might almost appear incredible.

"We have seen that the disturbed state of the

country gave the land-agents opportunities of widening the breach between landlords and tenantry, and at the same time put good bargains into the hands of the merchants, by the facility given to the landlords of drawing on them in foreign countries, where they might travel or reside. This increased the system of middle-men and rack-rents, and thus laid the foundation of future suffering for the people. To this system there appeared no bounds, and no prospect of setting limits to them, until the American revolution gave the public mind a fresh spring for exertion.

"The naval and military force of England being reduced by that unnatural war, and rendered unable to protect the trade, or even the soil of Ireland, from the then powerful fleets and armies of France, the Irish people were under the necessity of arming for their own defence. They committed the direction of their force to such gentlemen as were resident in the country, and considered men of public spirit. Many of these gentlemen went farther in professions than in subsequent times they would have wished, when political rights became more largely discussed and better defined.

"In other words, they overstepped the limited compass of their early prejudices and views of interest, as appeared afterwards in their conduct; for, although they attended public meetings where some of the soundest principles of political economy were developed and disseminated among the people, who heartily approved of the sentiments; yet those leaders secretly wished for an opportunity of abandoning the connexion, and this pretext they soon found in the crimes committed in the name of Liberty, which succeeded the outburst of the Revolution in France, in 1789, which shook every throne in Europe. Such was the condition of the people, the nature of the disturbances in the north of Ireland, the origin of the Volunteers, the views of a large portion of its leaders, the seeds of disunion that were sown in its organization, and the results that were in embryo about the close of the year 1791.

"Thus far my notes were copied by Robert Montgomery, attorney at law, who founded the market that now bears his name.*

"*Belfast, March 8th*, 1843. JAMES HOPE."

The preceding notices of the condition of the people, the cruelty of their oppressors, and the various agrarian disturbances resulting from them during a period of thirty years, from the beginning of the reign of George the Third to the origin of the Society of United Irishmen in 1791, though apparently unconnected with the particular epoch which this work is intended to illustrate, are by no means irrelevant to the subject of it; and, without reference to them, to consider the outburst of popular frenzy and discontent in 1798, would be to set about an inquiry beginning and ending with a result, and leaving its causes altogether out of consideration.

* The vigour of a mind teeming with original thoughts (the matured production of strong sound sense), displayed in all the writings of this singular man, amply compensates for any defects of style, or occasional abruptness in taking up or dismissing a subject. As to his orthography, nothing can be much worse; in fact, a richer mine of deep thought it would be difficult to find buried in such a mass of ill-spelled words. I claim some merit for the disinterment of the sense, but none beyond the discerning of it and the correction of the orthography.

Having frequently to recur to those writings of his which he has placed in my hands, the preceding observation will render any further reference to the subject of it unnecessary.

SAMUEL NEILSON.

From a Miniature by Byrne

Published by Maldon &c.

MEMOIR

OF

SAMUEL NEILSON.

CHAPTER I.

THE character of Samuel Neilson has met with more than the ordinary share of injustice which has befallen the memories of the United Irishmen. Two brief sketches of his life have appeared; one was published by Bernard Dornin, in New York, in 1804, bearing the signature of "Hibernus;" and it is evidently written by one who had been intimately acquainted with him.* The other sketch appeared in the Dublin Morning Register, November 29th, 1831; the writer of which is styled the friend of Neilson, by the editor, and many of the accurate details in that paper, I believe, could only have been furnished by the early friend of Neilson, Mr. Charles Teeling. I am indebted to the family of Samuel Neilson, for the materials which have enabled me to lay this

* The above named sketch of the life of Samuel Neilson appeared in the Irish Magazine for September, 1811, as an original article, and it has been cited in other publications as having been written by Walter Cox, the editor of that Magazine.

Memoir before the public ; and I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to pay the humble tribute of my respect to the filial affection, and tender regard for the memory of a beloved father, on the part of those by whom I have been intrusted with these documents.

In the course of my inquiries in the prosecution of this work, I have often had occasion to notice the solicitude of the surviving relatives of the unfortunate actors in the struggle of 1798; for the memories of the men who sunk or suffered in it, and the value they set on any existing records of theirs, which served to recall the qualities for which they were remarkable, or the scenes in which they took a prominent part; but in no instance have I observed that feeling more strongly marked, than in the deep and anxious interest evinced by the daughters of Samuel Neilson, in every thing that regarded the memory of their father.

Samuel Neilson was born in September, 1761, at Ballyroney, in the county of Down, of which place, his father, Alexander Neilson, was a dissenting minister. He was partly educated by his father, and partly at a school in the neighbouring town. He received a liberal education, made some proficiency in mathematical attainments, and displayed in his early years an eager desire for knowledge. His natural disposition and character, even in boyhood, were calculated to give him a superiority among his companions; he was bold, manly, and generous. In determining his future pursuits in life, the selection was made less with regard to the bent of his inclinations than to the views of family convenience. He was put

to business about sixteen, and served his apprenticeship to his elder brother, John Neilson, a woollen-draper, in Belfast. In September, 1785, he married a daughter of William Bryson, a highly respectable and wealthy merchant of that town. Shortly after his marriage he commenced business, and his establishment, the "Irish Woollen Warehouse,"* by his assiduity and mercantile ability, became the most extensive and respectable house in that line in Belfast. Up to the year 1792, his affairs continued to increase in prosperity, and at that period he was possessed of a good deal of property, estimated by his family at about £8,000. Like most of the other leaders of the United Irishmen, he commenced his political career in the ranks of the volunteers. At the altar of national independence the first glow of liberty was kindled, and long after the shrine itself was laid in the dust, the flame continued to animate his being, and neither sickness nor suffering, in imprisonment or in exile, extinguished it in the breast of Neilson.

The precursor of the Society of the United Irishmen, was one called the Northern Whig Club, the establishment of which was suggested by Lord Charlemont, in a letter addressed to Dr. Haliday, dated 20th of February, 1790, in which he states, "that an institution of this kind, by holding out a congregation to the true believers at Belfast, would be a means of fixing, and even recalling, many who might otherwise wander from the faith."

The first meeting was held on the 16th of March,

* Situated on part of the ground now occupied by the Commercial Buildings.

and a declaration was drawn up and signed by all its members, in which Reform and Parliamentary Independence were put forth as the two grand objects of the Club, but not one word was said on the subject of Catholic Emancipation, but on the contrary, a paragraph was introduced meant to be hostile to that measure, in which the sneaking spirit of bigotry, fearful of betraying its own views, is to be discovered under such cautious phraseology as the following:— "That no person ought to suffer civil hardships for his religious persuasion, *unless the tenets of his religion lead him to endeavour at the subversion of the state.*"

It is to be borne in mind that both Lord Charlemont and Dr. Haliday were then inimical to Catholic emancipation, on the precise grounds set forth in the preceding paragraph.

Their first general meeting terminated in a banquet, at which, if the toasts drunk with rapturous applause afford any test by which we can judge of the political sentiments of the loyal Whig Club, it would seem that not a few of the honourable members were destined to accomplish the rhetorical feat on another occasion performed by one of them, namely, of turning their backs on their own opinions. Amongst the toasts we find the following: "The Prince of Wales," followed by "The glorious and immortal memory;" "The rights of the People;" "The cause for which Hampden died in the field, and Sydney on the scaffold;" "May the example of one revolution prevent the necessity of another;" "A speedy and happy establishment of Gallic liberty."*

* The History of Belfast. Berwick. p. 337.

On the 16th of April, another meeting of the Northern Whig Club, Gawin Hamilton, Esq., in the chair; Dr. Haliday, Secretary; an address to the electors of Ireland was put forth, beginning with the following words, "The third estate of parliament no longer exists, the power of regenerating it rests with you;" and calling on the electors to demand a solemn pledge from every candidate, both in and out of parliament to promote the success of a measure for reform, and to prevent in detail the evils arising from parliamentary corruption, and the exercise of the prerogative in an arbitrary manner, and with danger to the person of the subject. This pledge was unanimously adopted, as well as the other measures recommended and signed by order of the meeting, Gawin Hamilton, President; Dr. Haliday, Secretary. Then follows a list of the original subscribers, members of the Northern Whig Club, sixty in number, amongst which are found the following:—

Earl of Charlemont,	James Stewart,
Lord de Clifford,	Henry Joy,
Earl of Moira,	Francis Dobbs,
Hon. Robert Stewart,	William Sharman,
(Lord Castlereagh,)	Dr. Haliday,
Rt. Hon. H. L. Rowley,	Gawin Hamilton,
Hon. H. Rowley, (Lord	Hamilton Rowan,
Longford,)	Francis Dobbs,
Rt. Hon. J. O'Neil,	William Todd Jones,
(Lord O'Neil,)	William Sinclaire,
Richard Griffith,	James White,
Savage Hall,	S. M'Tier,
E. Jones Agnew,	Robert Thompson,
William Brownlow,	Elfred Pottinger,

&c., &c., &c.

The proceedings at this day's meeting terminated as the former, with an entertainment, when "The glorious and immortal memory," was followed by "Our sovereign lord, the people."*

This was the perfection of effrontery. Their sovereign lord, the people, was, in fact, their own communion, which formed a sixth part of the population; but the latter proportion of it, they were not only content to deprive of their civil rights, but to gall their spirit by recalling names associated with events, the recollection of which could not be otherwise than painful to them.

At another meeting of theirs, the 14th of July, 1791, T. M. Jones in the chair, for the purpose of celebrating the anniversary of the French revolution, they passed resolutions expressive of "their sincere desire for the speedy and happy completion of the stupendous work." It would appear there was some justice in Lord Clare's designation of this society, when he termed it, "An eating and drinking club." The toasts on this occasion were, "The 14th of July, 1789;" "The gallant storming of the Bastile;" "Thomas Paine, and the Rights of Man;" "James M'Intosh, and the Vindiciæ Gallicæ;" (Poor Sir James!) "The glorious memory;" and "The majesty of the people."

The Whig Club, it is hardly necessary to say, died of inanition, and as its principles had nothing in common with *the people*, and its members had no public sympathies, except for persons who were of their own religion, their club deserved no popular

* The History of Belfast.

support, and it sunk into insignificance two years after its formation.

The political pursuits on which Neilson entered in 1791, caused his affairs to be neglected, and his business to be eventually abandoned. From the period of his connexion with the Northern Star, all his energies appear to have been devoted to the interests of the Society of which that paper was the organ. In the summer of 1791, the idea of forming a society similar to that subsequently established under the name of the Club of the United Irishmen, was suggested by Samuel Neilson to Henry Joy, M'Cracken, and Thomas Russell. The Volunteer Association was then fast sinking into insignificance; its leading members seemed only anxious to obtain for it from Government the privilege of a decent burial of its glories. The causes which had led to its decline were sufficiently obvious to Neilson and his associates; it was evident to them that there could be no hope for the successful maintenance of the principles of the Volunteers, but in the cordial union of the people of Ireland of all religious persuasions. Neilson formed the idea of establishing a political club that would revive the great principles of the expiring association, namely of reform and parliamentary independence. The matter was talked over with Henry Joy, M'Cracken, Russell, and one or two other persons at a tavern. Neilson on this occasion said, "Our efforts for reform hitherto have been ineffectual, and they deserved to be so, for they have been selfish and unjust, as not including the rights of the

Catholics in the claims we put forward for ourselves." The evening of that day, when the subject was first mooted, M'Cracken, on his return home, mentioned the circumstance to a member of his family, who, in reference to the proposed club, expressed some doubts of Roman Catholics being sufficiently enlightened to co-operate with them, or to be trusted by their party. M'Cracken, with great earnestness, endeavoured to show the groundlessness of the prejudices that were entertained against the Catholics. His opinions were shared by one of his sisters, (to whom I am indebted for these particulars,) a person even then in advance of public opinion on the subject in question, and whose noble sentiments on most matters were above the level of those of ordinary minds. Her brother, she informs me, asked the relative who had expressed the apprehensions referred to, if there was not a poor old blind woman under their roof, who had spent the best part of her life in their family, and although she was a Roman Catholic, was there anything in this world they would not trust to her fidelity? and if they put their whole confidence in her because they happened to be acquainted with her, why should they think so ill of those of the same creed whom they did not know? These details, trivial as they may seem, are calculated to throw some light on the original views and principles of those persons who were the founders of the Northern Society of United Irishmen.

It ought not to be forgotten that the recognition of the great principle of religious liberty was the prominent feature of the plan of the proposed

society. That principle had indeed been advocated by Neilson from the beginning of his political career, and to the close of it he was a consistent advocate of immediate and unconditional emancipation. Neither, in justice to the memory of the founders of this society, ought it to be forgotten that to them we owe the extraordinary revolution in public opinion with respect to the Catholic claims which took place in 1792, the concessions granted that year, in consequence of the impulse given to that question, the awakening of the dormant energies of the Roman Catholic leaders, and the rescuing of their cause from "the cold dull shade" of the Catholic aristocracy.

The Dungannon Convention of 1793, which was said to represent 1,250,000 men, emanated from a public meeting, held in Belfast the 26th of December, 1792, convened by the popular party and the principal leaders of the United Irishmen, at which meeting Neilson acted as secretary, Mr. Charles Ranken presided as chairman, and the business was opened by Mr. Robert Thompson. He said, "he preferred our Government to every other with an improved representation, but without it any other was as good."

Mr. Robert Getty said, that "a reform in parliament was the utmost bound of his wishes," and urged with ability, "the wisdom of rallying round one point—the Constitution."

A Mr. Munford recommended "the strong and able men of the community to come forward, and enrol themselves among their armed brethren, and

those who were in an advanced state of life to contribute to the cause in a pecuniary way, for the purpose of purchasing arms, ammunition, and accoutrements, as the cause required the union and force of the whole people."

The Rev. Mr. Kelburne said, "he did not prefer our much boasted Constitution. He did not really know whether there was any such thing. He could not approve of hereditary legislature (in the House of Lords,) because wisdom was not hereditary; yet he concurred in the present declaration, and preferred a reformed parliament, though he might esteem another government more perfect."

A declaration of their political sentiments was put forth at this meeting, wherein "they declare that a radical reform in the representation of the people has long been, and still is, the great object to which all our wishes, all our endeavours tend,—the object which we have pursued, and which we shall never cease to pursue until it is attained,—that to attain it we shall think no sacrifice too much, no risk too great; and that *no* reform can ever be adequate or useful, satisfactory or *just*, unless *all Irishmen*, of every description, shall be equally and fairly represented."

The appointment of a committee of twenty-one was then determined on to carry into effect the preparatory arrangements for the proposed Convention, for the purpose of naming delegates, "and corresponding with their fellow-citizens in all parts of the country."

The committee appointed consisted of the following gentlemen.

C. Ranken,	H. Haslitt,
John Homes,	R. Getty,
James Homes,	S. M'Tier,
Dr. White,	William Tennent,
James Ferguson,	Robert Sims,
William Sinclaire,	Dr. M'Donnell,
Samuel Neilson,	G. Jay,
Rev. P. Vance,	H. Crawford,
Rev. S. Kelburne,	T. Brown,
H. Montgomery,	John Boyle.

On the 15th of February, 1793, the delegates from the several northern counties assembled at Dungannon, (Wm. Sharman in the chair, Henry Joy and William Armstrong secretaries,) "being fully acquainted with the sentiments of their particular districts, declared the sense of the people "in a series of resolutions expressive of "their attachment to the form and original principles of the British Constitution;" "of their disapproval of republican forms of government, as applied to this kingdom, and of principles which have a tendency to dissolve all government, and destroy distinctions in society;" "of the necessity of a complete parliamentary reform, as essential to the peace, liberty, and happiness of the people," and "of immediate and entire emancipation of the Roman Catholics as a measure indispensably necessary to the safety of the country."

They finished their proceedings by appointing a committee for the purpose chiefly of concerting proper means for calling a national convention at a future day, should circumstances render it unavoid-

ably necessary. The committee consisted of the following delegates:—

T. M. Jones,	William S. Dickson,
James A. Farrel,	J. Crawford,
A. M'Manus,	J. Church,
William Sinclaire,	H. Lyle,
Hugh Boyd,	D. Eccles,
J. Watt,	Dr. Reynolds,
J. Ball,	William Ross,
J. Allen,	William Stitt,
J. Cockran,	H. Falkner,
S. Ross,	William Finlay,
Gawin Hamilton,	J. Thompson,
Alexander Stewart,	J. Atchison,
Joseph Pollock,	J. Scott.*

At a public meeting held in Belfast, on the 19th of January, 1793, an address to his Majesty was determined on, signed, by order of the meeting, and in their name, by Charles Ranken, chairman, and Samuel Neilson, secretary; expressive of their gratitude for his Majesty's "recommendation of the situation of their Catholic brethren and fellow subjects to the attention of the Irish parliament;" and conveying the warmest sentiments of loyalty and attachment to his Majesty's person.†

At another meeting held in Belfast, on the 28th of January, 1792, the particulars of which will be found in the Appendix, Neilson took an active part. In reply to an opinion expressed by Mr. Henry Joy, "That neither the Protestant mind was sufficiently

* The History of Belfast, p. 408. † Ibid. 407.

prepared to grant, nor the Catholic one universally prepared to receive a plenary and immediate exercise of every right which members of a state can possibly possess;"—Neilson expressed his "astonishment at hearing that or any part of the address called a Catholic question!" To his understanding, "it no more presented a Roman Catholic question, than a Church question, a Presbyterian, a Quaker, an Anabaptist, or a mountain question. *The true question was, whether Irishmen should be free.*"

The idea of the Dungannon Volunteers Convention of 1783, was again thus acted on in 1792, when the convention of reformers assembled there the 15th of February in the latter year, in accordance with the views which the leading United Irishmen put forth at the Belfast meeting, the 26th of December, 1792; and this convention identified the struggle for reform with that of Catholic emancipation, and gave a powerful impetus to the movement of the latter question.

The first important movement of the Catholic leaders, the most important ever made by them, was, the carrying into execution the plan of taking the sense of all the Catholics of Ireland through the means of a convention. The project of appointing delegates for this purpose was adopted at a meeting of the general committee, the 17th of March, 1792. The plan was proposed by Theobald Wolfe Tone, and, according to Mr. Wyse, was in some respects analogous to one devised by his father in 1760.* Here,

* Wyse's History of the Catholic Association, p. 104.

again, we find the influence of the bold views of the United Irishmen. Wyse's Catholic convention was to be a secret convocation of delegates; they were to hold their hole and corner meetings, wherever it was possible to escape detection. Tone's Catholic convention was to hold its sittings in face of day, in the metropolis, with all possible publicity; and when the delegates were appointed to carry over the petition to the king, Tone's influence, and his sense of the important part he had played in bringing this project into execution, had the effect of parading the delegates through the north of Ireland, *on their way to London from Dublin.* At Belfast, the five delegates, Messrs. Keogh, Byrne, Devereux, Bellew, and French, were received with public honours; the horses taken from their carriage, and entertainments given them by the leading members of the United Irish Society. The first meeting of the delegates was in Taylor's Hall, Back-lane, Dublin, on the 2nd of December, 1792, on which occasion, Dr. M'Nevin first distinguished himself as an advocate of the claims of the great majority of his countrymen. The Catholic convention of 1793, was, then, the work of Theobald Wolfe Tone. The power on which its leaders relied for resisting the opposition of the ascendency party, and daring to take so formidable a step, was the spreading influence of the Northern societies, based on the principle of uniting Irishmen of all religious persuasions. This convention was to Catholic claims in 1793, precisely what the Clare election was to them in 1829; and it is singular enough to find the same man whose clear

perception distinguished the portentous signs of the times at the latter period, and saw no alternative but Catholic emancipation or civil war, so far back as fifty years ago, coming forward in his place in the Irish parliament in favour of a similar measure, with the view of averting the evils with which the successful proceedings of the Catholic convention of 1793 were evidently fraught. The Honourable Lieutenant Arthur Wellesley was returned for the borough of Trim, in the latter part of 1790. During the two following years his name is not found in the reports of the debates, as having taken any part in them on any question.

The first speech we find reported of his, was on the 10th of January, 1793, at the opening of the session.* The address to the throne was moved by the Earl of Tyrone. The Honourable Mr. Wellesley seconded the motion. He said, "That at a time when opinions were spreading throughout Europe inimical to kingly government, it behoved us, in a particular manner, to lay before our gracious sovereign our determination to support and maintain the constitution; he took notice that under the present reign this country had risen to a state of unexampled prosperity."

He said that "the augmentation of the forces, as mentioned in the speech, had from the circumstances of the times, become necessary. He reprobated in very severe terms, the conduct of the French toward their king, and their invasion of the territories of

* Irish Parliamentary Debates, vol. xiii. p. 5.

sovereign princes, and their irruption into the Austrian Netherlands. He applauded the conduct of the administration of this country for issuing the proclamation of the 8th of November; and he condemned the attempt of a set of men styling themselves national guards, and appearing in military array—a set of men unknown in the country, except by their attempts to overthrow the Government; the conduct of the administration on that occasion entitled them to the confidence of the people. In regard to what had been recommended in the speech from the throne, respecting our Catholic fellow-subjects, he could not suppress expressing his approbation on that head; he had no doubt of the loyalty of the Catholics of this country, and he trusted that when the question would be brought forward, respecting that description of men, that we would lay aside all animosities, and act with moderation and dignity, and not with the fury and violence of partizans."

The bill for the relief of Roman Catholics was brought into the house in the following month. On the 25th of February, a motion was made by a Mr. Graydon with reference to that bill before it went into committee, "to limit the number of freeholders capable of voting at elections, to those possessing freeholds of £10 yearly value." Mr. Wellesley said, "He had no objection to giving the Roman Catholics the benefits of the constitution, and, in his opinion, the bill conferred them in an ample degree; but the motion of the honourable gentleman seemed calculated to promote disunion. With the bill, as it stands, the Protestants are satisfied, and the Roman

Catholics contented; why, then, agitate a question which may disturb both? It has been said, that admitting the forty shilling freeholders of the Roman Catholic persuasion to vote at elections, will annihilate the Protestant establishment in Ireland; and he has founded this assertion upon a supposition, that the Roman Catholics will, in voting, be directed by their priests; but have not Roman Catholics, like Protestants, various interests and various passions by which they are swayed? The influence of their landlords, their good or bad opinion of the candidates, their own interests, and a thousand other motives? It appeared to him that they would not vote in a body, or as had been supposed, if the bill should pass in the present form; but if the motion of the honourable gentleman should be adopted, then, indeed, they would undoubtedly unite in support of Roman Catholic candidates."*

In the preceding year, on the presentation of the petition of the Roman Catholics of Ireland to the House, which was rejected by an overwhelming majority of 208 to 23, the Solicitor-general, Mr. Toler, plainly expressed his opinion, that "the petition, though under a very modest guise, considering where it came from, he was inclined to suspect as a piece of the same principles" as those, he went on to state, "which were taught by political quacks who tell us that radical reformation was necessary in parliament. He had seen papers signed by Tobias M'Kenna, with Simon Butler in the chair, and Napper Tandy lending his countenance."

* Parliamentary Debates, vol. xiii. p. 313.

"Such fellows," (to use the language of Lord Headfort) were too despicable to notice, and therefore he should not drag them from their obscurity." In a subsequent part of the debate, in disclaiming supposed personal allusions to an honourable member, he said, "he did not allude to him, but to that blasted society called United Irishmen."*

The influence attributed to the reviled society in the accomplishment of the Catholic relief bill was pretty obvious in the language of the delegates of the Irish parliament; and the introduction of the convention bill in the month of July 1793, was indicative enough of the vindictive feelings entertained with respect to the means by which that measure of relief was effected. When his Majesty, in 1793, was pleased to recommend the case of his Roman Catholic subjects to the Irish parliament, Lord Chancellor Clare evinced his disposition towards the swinish multitude, as he termed the people on a previous occasion, in these words, "I did not expect," said he, "that any set of men would have dared to approach the throne with a gross and malignant deception upon the father of his people. I therefore seized this first opportunity to reprobate and detect it." In the progress of the debate, Mr. Forster, in the Commons, attributed to the fact of rousing and supporting this claim all kinds of plots and conspiracies; and in the Lords, the Archbishop of Cashell, who had previously declared in the house that "the Roman Catholic religion was a religion of knaves and fools," strenuously opposed the motion.

* Irish Parliamentary Debates, vol. xii. p. 202.

THEOBALD WOLFE TONE.

From an original portrait representing him in his volunteer uniform
in the possession of W. Burrowes.

Published by Madden & Co.

CHAPTER II.

Tone, at the time the establishment of the club was determined on, had never been in Belfast; he was only known there as a writer, whose pen had been employed in the service of the Whig Club, and in behalf of the Catholics. In the spring of 1791, his friend Russell having been appointed to an ensigncy on full pay in the 64th regiment of foot, then quartered in Belfast, visited that town, and became acquainted with many of the popular members of the Volunteer Association. At their instance he wrote to Tone to draw up a declaration, in which the Catholic question was to be noticed in favourable terms. Tone complied with this request, but when the declaration came to be read by the Belfast Volunteers, the passage alluding to the settlement of the Catholic claims, "for the sake of unanimity, was withdrawn for the present."*

This was the first connexion of Tone with the politics of Belfast, and it probably recommended him to Neilson, and those who thought with him on the subject of Catholic emancipation. In the beginning

* See Tone's Life, by his Son, American edition, vol. i. p. 51.

of October, 1791, Tone states that "he was invited to spend a few days in Belfast, in order to assist in framing the first Club of United Irishmen, and to cultivate a personal acquaintance with those men whom, though he highly esteemed, he knew as yet but by reputation."*

In consequence of this invitation, he went down with his friend Russell, (who at this time having quitted the army, had returned to Dublin,) and on arrival at Belfast, the persons whom he names as "having some reason to esteem himself particularly fortunate in forming connexions with," were Samuel Neilson, Robert and William Sims, William Sinclaire, and Thomas M'Cabe, "the men most distinguished for their virtue, talent, and patriotism." He proceeds to say, "We formed our club, of which I wrote the declaration, and certainly the formation of that club commenced a new epoch in the politics of Ireland."†

After remaining about three weeks in Belfast, Tone and Russell returned *with instructions* to cultivate the leaders in the popular interest *being Protestants*, and, if possible, to form in the capital a Club of United Irishmen. It is evident that the idea of forming the Society of United Irishmen originated with Samuel Neilson, met with the concurrence of Henry Joy M'Cracken, and Thomas Russell, was adopted by the Simses, M'Tier, M'Cabe, Haslitt, and Sinclaire; that Tone reduced that plan into form, and acted at the onset, in the organization of it, in accordance with the views pre-

* See Tone's Life, vol. i. p. 53. † Ibid, vol. i. p. 54.

viously taken up, of those already named, and in connexion, a little later, with other members of considerable influence from their wealth and station in the town.

In fact, strictly speaking, Samuel Neilson was the originator, and Tone the organizer of the society, the framer of its declaration, the pensman, to whom the details of its formation were intrusted. The object of Tone in assisting in the formation of the Belfast and Dublin societies is not to be mistaken—he clearly announces it in his diary. In concluding the account of the part he took in the formation of the former, he plainly states "to break the connexion with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils, and to assist the independence of my country—these are my objects."*

That Russell was acquainted with his views, we have a proof in the letter addressed to him by Tone the early part of 1791, which fell into the hands of government.† Whatever the republican tendencies of Neilson and his associates may have been, the probability is, that although if they had the power of choosing a form of government they would have given the preference to a republic over any other; they had at the beginning no definitive object beyond parliamentary independence, reform, and emancipation. Tone's influence in the Belfast societies suffered no diminution during his stay in Ireland; but in Dublin, his republican opinions had a very different

* Tone's Life, vol. i. p. 51.

† Commons' Report from secret Committee, Appendix, p. 11.

effect. With few exceptions, the leaders of the society which Tone had just formed, were apprehensive of being committed by his opinions. He says, "The club was scarcely formed before I lost all pretensions to anything like influence in their measures."*

We find by Tone's account of his first visit to Belfast, in October, 1791, that before the United Irish Society was yet organized, there was a secret committee of the leading political men of the popular party in the town, "their mode of doing business was by a secret committee, who are not known or suspected of co-operating, but who in fact direct the secret movements of Belfast."† The members of this secret committee were William Sinclaire, Samuel M'Tier, Samuel Neilson, William M'Cleery, Thomas M'Cabe, William Sims, Robert Sims, Henry Hazlitt, William Tennent, — Campbell, Gilbert M'Ilveen.

On the 14th of October, 1791, Thomas Russell and T. W. Tone were admitted members of it. It was at the meeting on this occasion the arrangements for the first public meeting of the Belfast Club of United Irishmen were entered into. M'Tier to be in the chair, — Sinclaire to move the resolutions, Sims to second them, Neilson to move the printing, and Tone and Russell to state the sentiments of the people of Dublin.‡

On the 18th of October, the meeting took place, and Tone having dined with Neilson, attended it.

* Tone's Life, vol. i. p. 55. † Ibid. vol. i. p. 143.
‡ Ibid., Washington edition.

The club consisted of thirty-six original members, and six new ones were proposed on this occasion.

A committee of correspondence was formed which consisted of Neilson, M'Tier, Hazlitt, and Sims. The chief business done was entering into communication with the Catholic committee, and soliciting the co-operation of the Dublin popular leaders. An erroneous impression generally prevails with respect to the direction of the affairs of the United Irish Societies throughout the country. The directory of the Leinster Societies, the principal members of which, subsequently to 1796, were O'Connor, M'Nevin, Emmett, Bond, and others of the Dublin leaders at different periods, it is commonly supposed was the only one in existence: such however is not the fact. Ultimately, there were four directories, one for each of the provinces. The Ulster directory was the first established. The principal members of it were Samuel Neilson; two merchants, natives of Belfast, one still living in that town; and Dr. White, now residing in America. The Munster directory was only in existence a short time before the suppression of the Rebellion. The Connaught directory was likewise of short duration, and its action was more limited than any of the others.

The Ulster directory was formed about the beginning of 1795. In 1796, Oliver Bond was associated with its other members. In his examination he states that "he acted with that association in conducting the affairs of the union, and when the Leinster organization was completed, early in 1797, he was regularly elected a member of that executive, though

he declined to act officially. He however, continued in the confidence of the union, and was consulted by them on all affairs of moment."*

The circumstance of the early existence of the Ulster directory, and the emanation from it of the most important measures, subsequently taken up, and attempted to be carried into effect by the Leinster directory is worthy of notice. These measures, it is generally imagined, originated with the latter. Arthur O'Connor became a member of the Leinster directory in November, 1796, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and another person of exalted rank, still living, were nominated at the same time; T. A. Emmett was not appointed till January, 1797; and Dr. J. W. M'Nevin about the same period. "None of them were members of the United System, until September or October, 1796."

In November, 1796, Arthur O'Connor, accompanied by Lord Edward Fitzgerald, visited Belfast on the occasion of the former offering himself as a candidate for the represention of the county of Antrim. They took a house in the immediate vicinity of Belfast, and resided there for some months. During their stay, their intercourse with the Belfast leaders prepared the way for the combined action of the Dublin and Northern Societies.

* Lords' Report, 1798. Examination of State Prisoners.

CHAPTER III.

NEILSON's exertions in promoting the grand object of his society, the union of Irishmen of all religious persuasions, were not confined to his editorial labours.

He travelled through the northern counties for the purpose of composing the differences between the Catholics and Presbyterians, and the more deadly feuds between the Peep of day boys and Defenders. In July, 1792, accompanied by Tone, and Lowry, he proceeded to Rathfryland, (his native Barony,) where disturbances had broken out between the Catholics and Presbyterians, and with the assistance of the gentry of that place, for the time succeeded in restoring peace.

In August, Neilson and Tone, joined by John Keogh, the gentleman styled Gog in his diary, and M'Nally, again visited Rathfryland on a similar mission, fresh disturbances having broken out. They returned to Belfast without having effected their object, and Neilson and Tone had an interview with Lord Downshire on the subject of the outrages committed by the Peep of day boys. His

lordship deprecated their interference; attributed the disturbances to the Defenders, and said they had 4000 stand of arms. Tone says, they "admitted the 4000 stand of arms; but state they have in no one instance been used offensively." He adds, "we pinned his lordship to the confession that the Catholics have never in any case begun the attack," and finally, "declared our conviction that if the Catholics could see that they had equal protection with the Protestants, peace would be immediately restored."*

In September, 1795, we find by a letter addressed to Tone from Belfast, that "Neilson had been called away by express to settle some disputes in the county Armagh, between the Peep of day boys and Defenders, Charles Teeling being there before him."†

The feuds which were at this time raging in Armagh were tending to involve the whole country in civil war. A few days before the battle of the Diamond, Charles Teeling, then a lad of seventeen, counting on the influence which his family possessed in this part of the county over the Catholics, and "learning with deep concern that the adverse parties were preparing for a general conflict, *with the full knowledge and under the very eye of those authorities whose duty it was to have restrained them*," determined on proceeding to the scene of these disturbances, with a view "to open some channel, if possible, for a pacific arrangement, and to preserve the county from a wanton expenditure of blood."‡

* See Tone's Life, vol. i., p. 174. † Ibid., p. 290.

‡ Charles Teeling's Pamphlet, "Observations on the History and Consequences of the Battle of the Diamond." Dublin, 1838.

Teeling set out from Lisburn, the residence of his family, for the county of Armagh, but had not proceeded far before he discovered the difficulties of the mission he had undertaken, difficulties which the youth and inexperience of a lad of seventeen were ill calculated to cope with. It is to be observed, this act of his originated with himself, was influenced by no political motive, and that humanity alone and an abhorrence of persecution had induced him to take this step. The act deserves to be recorded, and well entitles Teeling's name to be remembered with respect and honour by his countrymen. The interruption he met with on the route from various armed parties of men, "fully appointed with all the accoutrements of a volunteer corps," about to turn their weapons against their Catholic brethren, made Teeling acquainted with the difficulties of the step he had taken; he felt that "he wanted the co-operation of a friend, and the aid of counsels wiser and better than his own, and his mind could suggest none more suitable for the purpose than Samuel Neilson. He was the ardent patriot, the decided enemy to oppression in every shape and every form, and the strenuous advocate at all times and seasons of civil and religious liberty."

Teeling despatched a letter to Neilson, entreating him to meet him at Portadown, for the purpose of proceeding with him to the scene of the disturbances. In the mean time, Teeling received the news of the conflict of the Diamond, journeyed homewards; and met his friend Neilson, proceeding on his

route from Belfast, and the following morning they returned to their respective homes.*

As with Neilson originated the idea of forming the Club of United Irishmen, so likewise with him the establishment of the *Northern Star*, the organ of its opinions, had its origin.

In the preliminary address to the people, of that paper, it is stated, that "its attention shall be turned to a parliamentary reform, founded on a real representation of the people, and to the union of the people. To the former object its efforts will continue to be directed, until the venal borough trade shall cease, until corruption shall no longer, at least, be publicly avowed, and until the Commons House of Parliament shall become the real organ of the public will; then, and only then, shall the labours of the *Northern Star* in this great national business cease."

The above are the avowed, but not the only objects this paper had in view. If Tone's account of them is to be relied on, he states that it was set on foot "to give a fair statement of all that passed in France, whither every one turned his eyes; to inculcate union amongst Irishmen of all religious persuasions; to support the emancipation of the Catholics; and finally, as the necessary, though not the avowed consequence of all this, to erect Ireland into a republic independent of England. This paper,

* Appendix. Extracts from C. Teeling's pamphlet of "The Battle of the Diamond."

which they called appositely the *Northern Star*, was conducted by my friend Samuel Neilson, who was unanimously chosen editor, and it could not be delivered into abler hands."*

Neilson, however, in his examination before the Secret Committee, (as taken from his own report of it,) positively denies that separation became the object of the society, before the severity of the Government measures caused them to abandon their first objects, reform and emancipation.

Tone's journals leave little doubt as to Neilson's political views in the early part of 1795. "I set off," he states, "from Dublin for Belfast on the 20th of May. During near a month that we remained there, we were visited every day by one or other. Even those who scarcely knew me were eager to entertain us; parties and excursions were planned for our amusement; and certainly, the whole of our deportment and reception at Belfast very little resembled those of a man who escaped with his life only by miracles, and was driven into exile to avoid a more disgraceful fate. I remember particularly two days that we passed on the cave hill. On the first, Russell, Neilson, the two Simses, M'Cracken, and one or two more of us, on the summit of M'Art's fort, took a solemn obligation, which I think I may say I have, on my part, endeavoured to fulfil, never in our efforts to desist, until we had subverted the authority of England over our country, and asserted her independence."†

* Tone's Life, vol. i. p. 67. † Ibid, vol. i. p. 127.

Before his departure for America, on the 15th of June, he adds, "I explained to Sims, Neilson, and C. G. Teeling, my intentions with regard to my conduct in America, and I had the satisfaction to find it met, in all respects, with their perfect approbation."

On the 4th of January, 1792, the first number of the *Northern Star* was published in Belfast. The agreement entered into by Neilson with eleven of his townsmen, the majority of whom were opulent merchants of Belfast, to establish a newspaper, for the dissemination of the views and principles of their society, was completed on the 3rd of July following. The capital invested in this undertaking was £2000, divided into forty shares of £50 each, to be held by the proprietors. A copy of this agreement will be found in the Appendix. Neilson was appointed the editor of the new paper, and the zeal and activity which he displayed in the management of it, soon rendered its circulation the most extensive of any paper in Ireland. Its sale for some years varied from four to five thousand each impression. Neilson embarked £500 in this speculation. For a more detailed account of the management of this paper, and of those who contributed to it, the reader is referred to the previous series of this work.* The literary ability displayed in the *Northern Star* was certainly inferior to that exhibited in the Press, but it served the purposes of the United Irishmen much better; its circulation was far more extensive,

* The United Irishmen, vol. ii. p. 51.

and was certainly due to the indefatigable efforts of Samuel Neilson. In the latter part of 1794, he became sole proprietor of the paper. The various persecutions carried on against it, had obliged Neilson, about this period, to dispose of all his property, and to relinquish his business, in order to meet the enormous expenses attendant on these proceedings, and the unexpected demands arising from them. The other proprietors, shortly after the prosecutions, disposed of their shares to Neilson, and thus, encompassed with peril, he became the sole proprietor of the paper. In 1792, the printer and proprietors had been prosecuted and acquitted. In January, 1793, six informations were filed in the King's Bench against them for seditious libels, and in November, 1794, they were prosecuted for publishing the address of the United Irishmen to the Volunteers. In September, 1796, the office was attacked and ransacked, and Neilson and several others were arrested, conveyed to Dublin, and committed to Newgate, where they remained till the latter part of 1797. In the month of May, 1797, the office was again attacked by a military rabble, the presses broken, the types thrown into the street, and the paper finally suppressed. The particulars of the arrest in September, 1796, are given in the *Northern Star* of the 16th: "This morning presented a very unusual appearance in this town. A large body of cavalry appeared in arms, the whole garrison was turned out, the artillery paraded, and there was every show of war. Several great people came to town; Mr. John Pollock, attorney, attended by

Lord Downshire, Lord Westmeath, Lord Castlereagh, &c. Detached guards were stationed in several parts of the town, and several of the inhabitants were arrested under warrants signed by Mr. Justice Boyd, now resident, as we understand, in Dublin. Mr. Sampson's house, in particular, was beset with soldiers, and searched by virtue of a warrant to apprehend Mr. Samuel Neilson for high treason, who was at the same moment walking publicly on Change. This search was made by the Earl of Westmeath, accompanied by Captain Coulson, of the artillery, and a large armed guard of horse and foot. Mr. Sampson assured these gentlemen that Mr. Neilson had been but a few minutes before at his house, where he always had been a welcome guest, and had left it so lately, that he was surprised they had not met him on the way. Mr. Sampson said his wife had lain in some days before, and might be alarmed at such an appearance. Lord Westmeath made the usual apologies, and searched every room, closet, pantry, &c., in the house, and amongst the rest searched that of Mrs. Sampson, although Mr. Sampson jocularly assured him she was not, as some other ladies are, in the habit of privately harbouring gentlemen.

"Some time after his departure, he returned to search the hay-loft, and certain other premises which we shall not name. Mr. Sampson offered to open some band-boxes, but that was politely refused on the part of the noble Lord; upon which Mr. Sampson assured him that he must have had very ignorant advisers respecting houses and persons of Belfast,

when he was directed to look either for any concealment in his house, or, what is more, when he supposed that Mr. Neilson, who was an honest and honourable man, would be found concealed in any place. Accordingly, when the guard was removed from his door, he went on Change, and communicated what had passed to Mr. Neilson, who was walking there.

"Mr. Neilson thereupon stepped to his own house, and related to a virtuous wife what had passed, who in two words encouraged him never to return home with any stain of baseness or dishonour. He then repaired to the artillery barrack, where he surrendered himself to Lord Westmeath. The Earl seemed reluctant to take him into custody, as he said he had given the warrant out of his hand. Mr. Neilson replied that he did not intend to be captious, and that he would remain in his custody till it could be sent for: upon which he went into the public library belonging to the Society for Promoting Knowledge, where Mr. Pollock and Lord Downshire were in pursuit of something, and gave himself into custody, observing that a speedy trial was all he wished for or wanted; that he hoped, however, for the sake of public sentiment, and for peace, that he might not be, as many men of late had been, kept in gaol for a year without *any trial* at all. It is to be observed, that the foreman compositor of the *Northern Star* was taken into custody and a number of papers seized, without any warrant to that effect. This was the most direct attack yet made upon the freedom of the press. The private papers of several other persons

were seized upon and sealed up by Mr. William Atkinson, the constable. Several informers acted under Mr. Pollock and Lord Downshire on this occasion—some disguised, some not.

"It is but proper to observe, that Lord Westmeath, at the desire of Mr. Sampson, did not make this search till Mr. Bristow, whose appearance might give some colour of peace to the transaction, came at Mr. Sampson's request. Mr. Haslett, Mr. Shanagan, Mr. R. Osborne, and Mr. Young, were arrested, and Mr. Russell surrendered himself as Mr. Neilson had done.

"About half-past three, the armed procession, with their prisoners, left town. We have not time to give a description of it—suffice it to say, that Mr. Pollock, the attorney, conducted himself with as much firmness as the *patriotic* Lord Castlereagh, the disinterested Lord Downshire, the *amiable, virtuous*, and *accomplished* Earl of Westmeath did—with manly courage, and *dignified* wisdom. In short, they did that by dint of *nightly scouting* and *martial* attack, which no human creature was disposed to resist, and which the meanest constable in town could have done as well as they."

Tone, on hearing of the arrest of Neilson and Russell, speaks of the event in his diary as the heaviest blow that could fall on their cause:—"It is impossible to conceive the effect this heavy misfortune has upon my mind.* If they fall, where shall I find two such men to replace them. My poor friend Russell, with whom I have spent the

* Tone's Life, vol. ii. p. 222.

happiest hours of my life, and whom I love with the affection of a brother,—a man who would, I know, sacrifice his life for me or my family, if it were necessary; and Neilson, an honest, a brave, a worthy fellow,—a good Irishman, a good republican: both of them men who have rendered such essential service to their country. My heart smites me now for the levity with which I have spoken of my poor Russell in those memorandums under the name of P. P."*

On the Sunday morning, (the day after the prisoners had been lodged in Newgate,) they were escorted with considerable military parade to the house of Judge Boyd, where their committals were made out; and as they were ordered to stand forth and answer to their respective names, we are informed by Charles Teeling, who was one of the prisoners, that Neilson seemed to treat the matter more lightly than some of his companions, or than comported with the character or the office of the Judge, who was "remarkable for the correctness of his judicial conduct, as well as for the virtues which adorned his private life."

The following is Teeling's account of the scene:—On Neilson being ordered to stand forth—"Samuel Neilson." "Here."—"You stand charged with high treason against" — "Whom, my Lord?"—"Suffer me to go on, sir." "With great respect I wish to set your Lordship right."—"I am right, sir." "And sober too," whispered Neilson, with a good humoured smile.

* Tone's Life, vol. ii. p. 223.

"The gravity of poor Russell, however, seemed to have been offended. No man regarded etiquette and the punctilios of politeness more. He looked solemn, stroked his fine black hair, and with a sweetness of expression peculiarly his own, and in a gently modulated, but sufficiently audible tone of voice, he begged of his friend Neilson to respect the dignity of the Bench, and the personal virtues of the learned Judge. Neilson bowed respectfully, &c." "Though the Judge could not have distinctly heard what passed, he was not perfectly free from embarrassment." The prisoners were reconducted to prison; pens, ink, and paper were prohibited, and all intercourse with their friends was forbidden.* Solitary confinement was at first enjoined, but the prisoners soon found means to baffle the vigilance of the keepers. They contrived to detach the locks from the doors, and at night, when the gaoler retired to rest, the prisoners visited one another, or assembled in one of the largest of their cells, and spent the night in social intercourse. In the morning, the locks were replaced, and a length of time elapsed before a discovery was made. The rigour of their treatment, after some time, was relaxed, and as the numbers of prisoners increased, separation became impossible.

Their friends outside the prison managed, likewise, to elude the watchfulness of the officers of the prison. On one occasion, Mrs. Bond obtained permission to send a pie to the prisoners; on removing the crust of which, they found, to their great delight, a supply

* Teeling's Narrative, p. 37.

of writing materials, foreign and domestic newspapers, letters from their friends, &c. The prisoners were now enabled to communicate with their friends; and the result of their interference was, that Government accorded permission to such of the prisoners as were married to see their wives. Neilson, however, tenderly as he loved his wife, declined to avail himself of it. He wrote to her, dissuading her from coming to Dublin. "I cannot," he said, "suffer you to undertake a long and fatiguing journey, at this season of the year, to visit me in my cell. Here your nerves will be shocked by the brutality of a turnkey, and at the Castle your pride will be wounded by the insolence of a minion in office." Before the letter reached Mrs. Neilson, she had already obtained an order for admission to the prison.* Teeling ascribes this indulgence to the prisoners to the humane interference of Lord O'Neil. Teeling's father had previously ineffectually sought permission to visit his son; he addressed several letters to his former friend Lord Castlereagh, and to the last his lordship replied, "You should state some specific grounds for the permission sought:" to which Teeling answered, "I can state no specific grounds for the permission sought, save that God and nature require parental attention to my child, which, considered in a ministerial point of view, may not be deemed sufficient."†

* Teeling's Narrative, p. 49.

† The families of the State prisoners confined in Kilmainham were hospitably treated and succoured on all occasions, when they stood in need of assistance, by an old gentleman of the name of James Dickson, who lived near Kilmainham. Mrs. Neilson was kindly received by him on her arrival from the north.

Visits, however, of another kind were made to the prisoners, the motives for which it is impossible to divine. On one occasion, the prisoners were roused from their beds at midnight; their cells, in succession, were visited by the Commander-in-chief, Lord Carhampton, "accompanied by two officers of the staff, a brutal turnkey, and four soldiers with fixed bayonets." Teeling says, on the door of his cell being opened, "the full visage of the turnkey with a dark lantern in his hand; the presence of soldiers under arms; and the horrid features of a countenance the most repelling I ever beheld, all conspired to fill my soul with terror." Teeling was asked by his Lordship, how long he had been confined? and on being told, from September, 1796, the Commander-in-chief remarked, "it was a long confinement." Teeling having addressed him by name; he said, "Ha! you know me then: good night, sir." He next visited Neilson's cell, and being recognised by Neilson, he begged to be informed where Neilson had known him, "as he did not recollect ever having had the honour of his acquaintance." Neilson replied, he had the honour of being reviewed by his Lordship, in the first battalion of Irish volunteers; and was proceeding to remind his Lordship of some passages in their volunteering days, when Lord Carhampton stopped him by informing him, "Those days were gone by; they were not fit subjects for prison reflection; he must dream of something else than Irish volunteers."

The cell of the Rev. Sinclair Kelburne and Dr Crawford was next visited. They were unacquainted

with the person of Lord Carhampton. His Lordship observed on entering, they were up at an early hour. Kelburne replied, "*Up*, Captain, is the order of the day." His Lordship pointing to a chair, said, "Then sir, I recommend you to be down." The chair was offered to the visitor, and declined with the observation, that "he never sat in the company of traitors." The term was thrown back; it was an awkward word to have fallen from the lips of a Luttrell. His Lordship then proceeded to the common hall, at the end of the corridor, where a number of young men were confined, who had only been committed the day before. In an old foraging cap, belonging to one of the prisoners, he observed a small knot of green ribbons; he immediately demanded to whom it belonged. A young man of the name of William Gordon, a nephew of Samuel Neilson, the son of a Protestant clergyman in Ulster, without any hesitation said, "It is mine." His Lordship's glance of indignation did not seem in the least to disconcert young Gordon. A slight inclination of the head conveyed his Lordship's wishes to the turnkey; in a few seconds he returned with irons. When he was putting on the fetters, several of Gordon's companions exclaimed, he might do the same with them. The Commander of the forces coolly answered, "Let them be indulged." The operation of ironing several of them was performed in his presence; and while the turnkey and his assistants were thus employed, the prisoners struck up one of the popular songs of the United Irishmen, and made the

walls of the prison resound with the well-known chorus :—

"Though we must to the dungeon go,
Where patriots dwelt before;
Yet in the cell, or on the sod,
We 're Paddies evermore."*

This visiting of the gaols was a favourite pastime of Lord Carhampton. He paid similar visits to a prisoner of the name of Dunn, who was charged with conspiring to assassinate him. A few days before his trial, at one of these visits, the certainty of the man's condemnation and execution did not prevent his Lordship from committing an assault on the prisoner in his dungeon, by striking him in the face with his cane, and inflicting a wound, which his Lordship accounted for on the trial, by stating that the prisoner Dunn, having denied the truth of a former admission of his guilt, "upon his coming up close to him, and not liking his looks, having nothing but a switch in his hand, he (Lord Carhampton) said, 'Keep off, you scoundrel;' and the end of the switch being scraggy, tore the skin under the eye."†

Neilson and his associates, however, had the satisfaction of receiving visits of a more agreeable nature than those of Lord Carhampton. Their northern friends continued from time to time to gain admission to their prison. The wife of Neilson, the sister of Henry Joy M'Cracken, the sister of Henry Haslitt, found means, even when the caprice of power

* Teeling's Narrative, p. 64.

† Ridgway's Report of the Trial of James Dunn, p. 37.

interrupted the indulgence that had been granted to the prisoners, to get access to them. In reference to the strength of family affection such as theirs, it might be truly said, that "stony limits cannot hold love out."

Teeling gives a touching account of the scene that took place when his aged father at length succeeded in gaining admission to him. Long confinement had then broken down the health and spirits of himself and his companions. He was conversing with Neilson and M'Cracken when his father entered the cell. They "looked for a moment at each other without uttering a word; the son observing with sorrow the sad change which anxiety and trouble had made in his father's appearance, since they had last met; the latter scarcely recognising in the pale features and debilitated form of the prisoner, the youthful son he had parted with full of life and health a year before. Greetings in a prison are somewhat worse than those that Sterne speaks of in the market-place. The old man, turning from his son, addressed Neilson: 'The atmosphere of a prison, I perceive,' said he, pointing to his son, 'is not favourable to the bloom of youthful plants.' 'We will bloom yet,' said Neilson, 'on the mountain's brow, where the wild heath blossoms, without parliamentary permission.'"

At the expiration of *an hour*, the old man was given to understand "that it was time to retire." "After a few words of paternal advice," says Charles Teeling, "he pressed his hand on my head, and endeavouring to conceal the emotions of his heart, he

said, in a voice I shall never forget, 'God bless you.' Neilson and M'Cracken were scarcely less moved than myself; we were silent and sorrowful." The poor old man himself, in a short time after this interview, was thrown into a dungeon, where he lingered nearly four years, and during his imprisonment, by the free quarters system, had all his property destroyed. He had given offence to Government by acting as secretary to a meeting at which a petition was resolved on to the King, praying for the dismissal of his Majesty's ministers.

CHAPTER IV.

The northern prisoners in 1796 and 1797 confined in Kilmainham gaol, were S. Neilson, C. Teeling, H. Haslitt, H. J. M'Cracken, Rowley Osborne, James Bartley, Dan. Shanaghan, and Thomas Richardson. The latter was the only Tyrone magistrate bordering on Armagh who at the time of the persecution would take an information against the Orangemen. At the instance of H. J. M'Cracken, who had at that period gone down to Armagh, and taken a most active part in getting information against the depredators, Richardson took the depositions. Russell was then confined in Newgate, and also Young.

Neilson had been very active and instrumental in obtaining the return of the Hon. Robert Stewart, (afterwards Lord Castlereagh,) on the reform interest of the county Down, in opposition to Lord Hillsborough and the Tory interest, in 1790.

In 1797, when Neilson was confined in Kilmainham, Lord Castlereagh visited that prison; on seeing him there, he expressed regret, and asked if he could in any way be serviceable to him. Neilson thanked

his Lordship; he had nothing to ask for himself, but if he felt disposed to do an act of justice and mercy, he would direct his attention to the case of two poor men in the yard into which the window of his apartment looked. They were under sentence of death for an offence, of which they were as innocent as his Lordship—that of taking arms; having been met by a party who were out on such an expedition, and compelled to accompany them. The wretch who had sworn against them felt such remorse, that his nightly wailings and lamentations were distressing to the other prisoners, the cell in which he was confied being under the apartment his Lordship then stood in. The names of the two unfortunate men were Pat Whelan and Martin Short: both had large families. Lord Castlereagh seemed much touched, took notes, and promised to intercede for them. That night there came a reprieve, and shortly after they were liberated.

A daughter of Neilson (now Mrs. M'Adam) was in Kilmainham when that reprieve arrived, and witnessed the joyful scene which ensued, when the families of the prisoners were allowed to see their friends, immediately after the communication of the reprieve was made to them.

Neilson and his northern companions remained in prison for nearly a year and a half. They made frequent applications to the chief secretary to be brought to trial, but the Government was in possession of no evidence they could rely on for their conviction. The magistrates in the north had indeed not neglected the ordinary means to procure witnesses

against Neilson, Russell, and M'Cracken, who were especially obnoxious to the ascendency party of Belfast.

A weaver of that town, who was a member of the Society of United Irishmen, was applied to long before their arrest by a Mr. Ferris Martin, an Orangeman of Ballynahinch, to lodge information against them, and was offered £500 if he would give evidence that would lead to their capital conviction. The weaver asked for time to consider the proposal, and the first step he took was to communicate it to the parties who were to be sworn against. He was instructed to give Mr. Ferris Martin a meeting at a public house which the parties were in the habit of frequenting, and to ascertain from him the name of the person who empowered him to offer the reward.

The meeting took place, and Neilson and his two friends were posted in a closet adjoining the room where these persons met. The proposal was renewed by Martin; the weaver inquired by whom the money was to be paid, and was told by Lord Hillsborough. He then expressed some doubt whether he could do what was required of him, and said he would think further of the matter. The man, it may be presumed, had no intention of coming forward, and the parties so deeply interested in this business thus ascertained the source from which danger was to be apprehended. This circumstance was recounted by M'Cracken to his sister, on whose authority the statement is made.

An Englishman of the name of Bird, alias Smith, who had been one of the scribes of the notorious

Dublin Journal, was found a more manageable person than the Irish weaver; he was persuaded to come forward against Neilson, and was placed under the tutelage of the Crown solicitor.

In these dreadful times, no man, however innocent he might be, could trust in the ordinary course of judicial proceedings for protection from the baseness of a perjured witness. Men's lives depended on the detection of their enemies' designs, and the legal proceedings which were to be based on the informations of such persons as Bird and Newell. The tactics of the Crown solicitors and prosecutors were put into operation; the spy system was carried into their own camp. A friend of Neilson and M'Cracken, who was employed as a clerk in the office of Mr. Kemmis, apprised them of the nature of the evidence that was to be brought against them. The law officers of the Crown, at the state trials, were often astonished at the discovery of previous examinations of the approvers, and the knowledge of their disclosures, which enabled Mr. Curran to take advantage of any discrepancy in their evidence. A young man of the name of Hughes, in the employment of Mr. Kemmis, was the medium of communication on these occasions. By such means there was ample time to learn the history of the informer, and to rebut his testimony from the incongruities of his own accounts of his movements, motives for coming forward, &c. Through the channel I have referred to, Henry M'Cracken contrived to have the following particulars of Mr. Bird's examination conveyed to Neilson, which I copy from the original paper, with the

following words endorsed on it, in the handwriting of S. Neilson: "A sample of 'the doings' of an informer and a spy against the lives of innocent men, by bearing false witness."

John Bird, alias Smith, who underwent examination, will prove as follows:—"That in September, 1795, deponent spent an evening with the said Samuel Neilson; that Samuel Kennedy,* in the examination afore-mentioned, introduced deponent as an English citizen; that they drank success to the French republic, which toast was given by said Neilson; they also drank success to the French army. Neilson spoke of the Irish Clubs; said he was a member; gave a description of them as corresponding with the printed paper, which is herewith sent. Neilson said he was afraid that the importation of fresh troops would render nugatory any attempts to cast off the yoke, till they were visited by the French, or favoured by peace, or by both.

"He spoke of the independence of Ireland, as an event that must take place in the common course of events. Speaking of the Catholics, Neilson said, he feared that the great mass were bigoted to monarchy, but with proper attention they might be made of great service to the cause, and so he said the Defenders might be, if they could be properly organized.

"A person present in company asked deponent if he had any objection to take the test of their society. Neilson, speaking of the society, said the English

* Kennedy was conducting compositor of the *Northern Star*.

societies were nearly done away, by keeping written journals; that ours, as he expressed it, are now secure,—we commit nothing to paper, we meet in small numbers; no precise fixed notice of time or place; when our numbers exceed thirty-five, we split, and the overplus lays the foundation for a new society; we have a very strong test, and use caution in choosing our members, and have not yet been betrayed.

"The said Neilson lamented that the Belfast Committee had not sent any pecuniary aid to the Cork printer, Driscoll, then in jail.

"Neilson said that he knew of six pieces of cannon which were buried, and that there were 35,000 true fellows, armed and disciplined, who could be raised in Ulster."

Such was the evidence Mr. Bird was to give against Neilson; the friends of the latter, however, or the small still voice of conscience, had been busy with Mr. Bird. The time for his services at length approached, Neilson was served with notice of trial, and when all the preparations of the crown lawyers were made for it, Mr. Bird, under the name of Smith, who had to give evidence against two others of the state prisoners, Shanaghan and Kennedy, on being called as a witness did not make his appearance. The crown prosecutor with some embarrassment informed the court, the chief witness was nowhere to be found; it was said he was gone to England his native country,—as he was only a bird of passage, and not of prey,—his flight was deemed by no means extraordinary.

On the 1st of February, 1798, the following paragraphs with accompanying copies of a correspondence between Mr. Bird, Mr. Dawes, King's Messenger, and Mr. Cooke, appeared in the *Press* newspaper.

"The following papers were left at our office. We have made every inquiry, and find them to be the hand-writing of Mr. Bird, who was to have appeared as a witness for the Crown, under the name of Smith, against Mr. Shanaghan and Mr. Kennedy, on a charge of high treason.

"'Two very extraordinary affidavits were lately produced by the crown lawyers, in the Court of King's Bench, in one of which I am accused of having ran away from my lodgings, without paying my rent! I have taken the liberty of laying before the public, the two following letters from Mr. Dawes, which will best elucidate that part of the affidavits which accuse me of having cheated Mrs. Morris. The letter to Mr. Cooke, contains my reasons for the step I took. Mr. Dawes' first letter was sent to me in Waterford; his second letter was left at the house of Mr. Kemmis, directing me to where lodgings were taken for me, in which it must be evident to every person I had no kind of concern; nor did I ever pay for my board, &c. Mr. Cooke paid four pound a week, exclusive of which I found my wines, liquors, &c. &c. Let the public read and judge how far the accusation coincides with facts!'

"COPY OF MR. DAWES' FIRST LETTER.

"'DEAR SIR, *Dublin, Oct.* 31, 1797.

"'MR. TAYLOR requests that you will come to town as soon as possible; and he thinks it would be better for you, if you wish to return, to leave your wife behind you, as you will have to stay in town but two or three days. When you come to town, my father wishes you not to come to our house, as the servants would inform the people from Blessington of it. Mr. Taylor desires you will go to Mr. Kemmis's first, and there you will get directions where you are to be. My father thinks there is no better road to Dublin than what you mention in your last. I inclose you a ten guinea note, which I hope you will receive safe. I wish you a pleasant journey.

'I remain yours, &c.

"'P.S. I hope to hear of your arrival on Friday next.'

"MR. DAWES' SECOND LETTER—A NOTE.

"'MR. DAWES' compliments to Mr. Johnston*—informs him that there is a place provided for him at a Mr. Morris's, Buckridge-court, Great Ship-street, (the upper house in the court,) within four houses of the Lower Castle-yard-gate.

'*Friday morning,*
'*3rd November,* 1797.'"

* "'A name I assumed by order of Government for my personal safety.'"

"The succeeding letter was delivered to Mr. Cooke on Tuesday last; and the originals of the whole are now at the office of this paper, for the inspection of any person who may think themselves interested therein."

[The letter is long, and many of its details of little public interest. The following extracts are sufficiently illustrative of the writer's character and conduct.]

"SIR,

"That the surprise you will feel on hearing from me will be very great, I can readily conceive; but though far removed from the reach of your power, I shall ever remember you with respect; nor mean I, even in the most distant manner, to be guilty of any insult towards you: no, Sir, I will not act ungratefully; you ever treated me with distinguished kindness and attention, until that creeping sycophant P——k—, strove to raise himself in your esteem, by depreciating me. * *

"A number of insurmountable obstacles presented themselves, to prevent the completion of the unfortunate business, which necessity! imperious necessity! urged me to begin; for when I seriously reflected on the dreadful phalanx of perjured monsters! wallowing in riot! and debauchery! ready at a nod! to sacrifice any man, however innocent! who might be obnoxious; I trembled—I could not support the ignominious idea of having my name enrolled in the annals of eternal infamy with theirs, and their well-adapted Major!!!

"The intimacy, which with sorrow and indignation I supported with Messrs. N—ll and D—n, fully determined me what course to steer. They judged me as thirsty for blood as themselves! They unfolded their secrets to me, in vicious confidence! and displayed such scenes of villany! as would almost appal the Devil! two more such blood-stained sanguinary cannibals! for the honour of human nature, I hope are not, ever were, or ever again will be in existence!

* * * *

"I have, Sir, little more to add than to assure you in the most solemn manner that I absented myself purely from the motives before mentioned, nor was I directly or indirectly applied to; I was neither tempted with hope of reward, present, or, to come! but I ingenuously confess, that my heart was never a single moment in your cause, a reference to my letters though apparently 'madly loyal' will convince you of that, as well as innumerable circumstances, which will now be too late recollected. Should it happen—Sir, that any of your myriads of spies should discover me, I would be more unfortunate than my first loss. I have taken every precaution, my experience could dictate; my papers and manuscripts, curious and interesting! are in other hands than mine, and can never be regained—I have chosen my present situation. The die is cast, and I shall await its event with fortitude and patience—I have, Sir, candidly stated my genuine reason for withdrawing, and I hope when passion shall subside, you will acquit me for the act which neither you nor I can now recall;

whatever shall be the event, I feel my heart beat lightly; and I hope to stand acquitted before my God and my Country for the deed. I shall now, Sir, take my leave, with most respectfully thanking you for every past favour and indulgence—and in despite of circumstances subscribe myself as usual,

"Sir,

"Your most grateful and much

"obliged humble servant, &c. &c.

(Signed) ———

"Mr. Secretary Cooke,

"&c. &c. &c."

On the 3rd of February, 1798, a letter of Mr. Bird, addressed "to the citizens of Ulster immolated in Bastiles, tenders," &c., appeared in the *Press* newspaper. He tells them that with respect to the means taken for criminating them, he

———"could a tale unfold,
Whose lightest word would harrow up the soul."

"That the vilest of human degeneracy, intent on compassing their deaths, had intrusted him with the diabolical schemes intended to destroy them." But he tells them "he will turn the engines of their persecutors against themselves, and defeat their machinations."

Mr. Bird, it need hardly be stated, on the 3rd of February, was at a convenient distance from the Castle. On the 6th of February, in the *Press*, he addressed another letter to the proprietor of the *Dublin Journal*, reminding him of his literary

assistance to the *Dublin Journal,* and in contradiction of a paragraph in one of its late numbers, in which it was formally announced that Mr. Bird had been assassinated by the United Irishmen. On the 11th of February, he addressed another letter to the same gentleman, (published in the *Press* on the 15th,) in which he speaks of the services required of him by his friend Major Sirr.

The latter, he states, accompanied by Mr. Newell had called on him the day preceding the trials at which he was to appear, and told him "that a man of the name of Parrock was come up from Belfast, on the part of the prisoners as an exculpatory witness, and requested him (Mr. Bird) to swear against him as a United Irishman, and put him up for two or three days till the trials were over." Bird objected, saying, "as the man was an Orangeman he could not be sworn against as an United Irishman." The Major then requested him "to swear against him for a robbery, to secure him from coming forward." Bird still objecting to this step, "the Major and Newell applied in a still more earnest manner to Mrs. Bird, requesting of her to swear a robbery against Parrock, but she refused to do so."

Bird, about a fortnight previously, had written a letter to Kennedy of the *Northern Star,* then in Newgate, where he had been imprisoned for eighteen months. This letter was published in the *Press* on the 20th of February.

He tells him that a great effort was about to be made for his release, and that "he hopes most sincerely next Friday he would be sent forth from his

dungeon." On the identical Friday, Mr. Kennedy was discharged without prosecution.

A few days before Mr. Neilson's release, he received the following letter from Bird.

"SIR,

"In what language to address a gentleman, whom I have so very deeply injured, I scarcely know; but with the purest truth I can assure you, Sir, that though plunged in a dungeon, deprived of every comfort tyranny could wrest from you, separated, for aught you know, eternally from your wife, your children, friends and home, your property devastated, your health and vigour drooping beneath such an accumulated load of misery and woe—still, Sir, had you known my *real* state of mind, it was infinitely less to be envied than yours. Happiness has to me been a stranger ever since the fatal day when poverty, and something worse, urged me to accept the wages of infamy. How those men may feel themselves, in whose hands I have been an instrument of ruin, I cannot say; but I strongly suspect, could the secrets of their hearts be exposed to your view, they would not be more the objects of your scorn, than your pity.

"The first gleams of happiness which for twelve months have visited my breast, have been, since I have ceased to rank amongst the number of those sanguinary monsters, who are in fact destroying that very system they are striving to support. You, Sir, will shortly be restored to that liberty which your life has been hitherto devoted to procure for others;

and if you can then *think* of me, without horror or disgust, it is as much as I can expect, more than I deserve. Great have been the pangs of remorse I have endured, when reflecting on the situation of your amiable wife and unprotected offspring; nor did the state of poor Shanaghan's family distress me less —they, I fear, suffered more than yours in some points—but 'twont bear reflection.

"I shall only further take the liberty of remarking, that if my utmost exertions to serve the men I was hired to destroy, can entitle me to pardon, from you and from them, I should once more feel myself restored to peace and happiness. I beg, Sir, you will excuse the liberty I take, and believe me (if you can) when I assure you that no man more fervently wishes you every blessing Providence can bestow than the person who for a time robbed you of all comfort on earth.

(Signed) "J. Bird."

Bird kept his word to Messrs. Kennedy and Neilson; he wrote to Mr. Cooke, making known to him his reasons for quitting his employment as an informer in the service of his department; and in communicating this step to the public, he makes a solemn protestation, "that Messrs. Neilson and Russell were utterly ignorant of the whole transaction," and "that he never intended to come forward to prosecute any man whatever, and that he was compelled to keep up the farce till the moment of action arrived, having determined long before how he then would act;" namely, to fly when the prisoners were brought to

trial. His letter to the viceroy, Lord Camden, appeared in the *Press* the 20th of February.

The following extracts from this singular communication are worthy of attention. "The consequence of the step I have taken has been, that two prisoners have already escaped the fate to which they had been so long doomed by anticipation. That point gained, although a very important one, by no means satisfies me. Messrs. Russell and Neilson are yet prisoners, and your Lordship's great knowledge of law precludes the necessity of my asserting, that there is no kind of charge whatever, which can be supported against these gentlemen. Let me incur what censure I may, I am determined to restore these gentlemen to their freedom, or lose my own by the attempt. I earnestly entreat your Lordship not to suppose I would deign to have recourse to empty menaces to attain my purpose. Should the enormous power and craft of your wicked counsellors prevail over the dictates of honour in your Lordship's breast, then, my Lord, am I irrevocably determined to place in Lord Moira's hands such documents as shall make your boldest orators dumb, and raise through the kingdom such a tornado of execration as should penetrate the cabinets of London and of Dublin. If your Lordship can find no better way to unravel the mystery, apply to Kemmis; perhaps he will tremble, but he can inform you of what it is I speak, and which your honour and your interest demand should be eternally concealed, or honestly explored, [query, inquired into?] I now take my final leave of your Lordship, in whose breast

it remains to decide on as important an event, take it all in all, as ever presented itself to your consideration.

(Signed) "J. Bird."

"P.S. If the gentlemen herein mentioned are not restored to liberty within three days from the delivery of this letter to your Excellency, I shall conceive it a direct denial, and take my measures accordingly."

Within the time specified Samuel Neilson, after a confinement of seventeen months, was set at liberty, without having been brought to trial. Mr. Bird's menace so far was successful, but Russell being still kept in prison, Bird "considered himself justified in making public the preceding communication on the 20th of February."

The report of his having quitted the kingdom was industriously circulated. The friends of the prisoners, however, who were interested in keeping him out of the hands of his late employers, contrived to afford him a safe asylum for several months. At length, in the latter part of 1798, he was discovered in the county of Louth, sent back to the care of his old friends, and committed to Newgate, charged with having forfeited the recognizance into which he had entered to give evidence on certain trials. During his confinement, one of the state prisoners, Mr. Dowdall (a natural son of Hussey Burgh) communicated to Mr. Grattan, by letter, addressed to him to the care of Mr. Curran, the fact of Bird's having confessed

that he was privy to designs, on the part of exalted individuals, that affected the life of Mr. Grattan. Curran neglected or thought it more advisable to decline communicating with Bird on this subject; and Grattan subsequently expressed a great deal of regret that advantage had not been taken of Bird's offer to communicate with Mr. Curran on the subject.

Dowdall was instructed to write to Bird, calling on him to address a letter to Mr. Grattan, disclosing the nature of the efforts that had been made to induce him to implicate that gentleman.

Bird, in concurrence with this application, wrote the following letter to Mr. Grattan, which, with the preceding particulars, are taken from Mr. Henry Grattan's Life and Times of his Father.*

J. BIRD TO MR. GRATTAN.

"*State prison, Dublin Castle,*
"SIR, *December* 1, 1798.

"The ephemeral triumph of corruption and vice by no means makes me repent having quitted his blood-stained banners; and amid the evils of a rigid confinement, the consciousness of having torn some intended victims from its merciless fangs, affords me a consolation in my solitary dungeon superior to any I have ever before experienced.

"By a strange concatenation of circumstances,

* Life and Times of the Right Honourable H. Grattan, vol. iv. p. 426.

some very important secrets have been thrown into my power, a part of which is, I believe, ere this, developed by me in a letter I addressed to the Marquis of Cornwallis, and signed 'Humanitas;' but a still more important one, and inexpressibly gratifying to my feelings, *has placed one of your venal persecutors* (*and the most celebrated one too*) *completely within my grasp*, and I have already secured such corroboration, as shall strike conviction into the breasts of those sanguinary and bigoted wretches, *who wish by any means to effect your destruction, though they dare not avow it.*

"Till I know that this letter is received safe, I shall not be more explicit; nor can I publicly avow it, till I am liberated, (of which I have not the smallest prospect,) except a prosecution by the State follows a prosecution by hirelings and assassins, in which no consideration whatever shall hinder my coming forward, if, Sir, when you are possessed of particulars, *you should deem such an act requisite to insure your safety.*

"You had once, Sir, an opportunity of witnessing, that when the proof of enormities, committed by the governors against the governed, was about to be investigated, I did not shrink from my part, but offered to appear and be examined at the bar of the House of Peers. This, Sir, I trust, will secure me credit when I assert, that in this communication, I have no other than direct views, which centre in one point,—*a most ardent desire of securing your life*

from murderers, and your character from perjured calumniators.

"I have the honour to be, with the most profound respect,

"Sir, your most humble and obedient servant,

"J. BIRD.

"N.B. Mr. * * * is the medium through which I transmit this letter, and anything that may hereafter occur in this business can be done through the same channel; but no person can call on me with safety, as Major Sirr takes up every one whom he knows of coming to see me."

In Dec. 1798, Dowdall wrote to Mr. Grattan to inform him, that the letter he had written to Bird "was discovered in his room, and occasioned his being sent to England in irons to prevent any further communications."

Here the curtain drops over the career of Mr. Bird; his name and exploits are no more heard of in the woful records of the crime and infamy of 1798.

CHAPTER VI.

On the 22nd of February, 1798, Neilson was liberated on his own recognizances, and that of Mr. John Sweetman, on condition that "he should not belong to any treasonable committee."

Seventeen months of rigorous confinement had broken down his health; some part of that time he had been in separate, or rather, solitary confinement; surely the mind that could bear up against such sufferings as he endured, was of no ordinary original vigour. His bodily health and strength indeed had declined; and those who had formerly known him, and now saw him on his liberation, described his personal appearance as having undergone a striking change, and his once powerful frame, as shrunken and debilitated. Neilson, on his liberation, was taken by his faithful friend, Mr. John Sweetman, to his country house in the vicinity of Dublin, and there received all the care that his sad condition required. It is to be observed Neilson was liberated about three weeks before the arrest of the principal leaders at Bond's. He states, in his examination before the Secret Committee, that he took no part

in politics after his liberation, until he found the Government had broken their engagements with him, and he had reason to know it was intended to arrest him again, and then he took an active part in assisting to fill up the vacancies caused by the arrests at Bond's.

The circumstance to which he alludes, and which he communicated to his family, was the following. A gentleman, with whom he had been formerly acquainted, (it may be presumed when reform was in vogue,) though at this period known to be a supporter of the administration, invited him to breakfast. Neilson was advised to decline the invitation. He accepted it, however. The gentleman lived at a short distance from town. Neilson rode on horseback to his house, and on his arrival observing some stir at the door of a guard-house at a little distance from the house, took care to give directions that his horse should be kept in readiness for him. During breakfast, there was nothing in the conversation of his host to excite any suspicion of foul play, but when he rose to depart, the gentleman suddenly altered his demeanour, and putting his back to the door, informed him he must remain where he was.

Neilson immediately went towards a bow-window which served as a door, opening on a garden plot in front of the house, and on the opposite side of the road observed some soldiers under arms, stationed at the door of the guard-house.

With his characteristic determination, thrusting his hand into his breast pocket he advanced towards his host, and told him he was prepared for this event; he

had not come unarmed, or alone; some of his friends were close by, and if a single motion was made or word was spoken by him when he ordered the servant to bring his horse to the hall door, he would shoot him on the spot. The gentleman had either little understood the character of his guest or supposed his late sufferings had effected a greater change in it than had taken place. He retired from his position, and after some further explanation was permitted to call his servant, and order Mr. Neilson's horse. The latter mounted without molestation, and it need hardly be added, he did not give his *friend* time to recover from his astonishment, before he was out of sight of his habitation.

Whether this circumstance occurred before or after the arrest at Bond's, or how far the condition on which he was released was complied with by him, I am unable to state. That he was actually engaged in the plans of the new Directory is certain.

If Neilson laboured under considerable excitement at this period, it is little to be wondered at. Liberated from prison in shattered health at the end of February, instead of the repose he so much needed, the events which daily took place, as they deprived the Union of its ablest leaders, and called for the renewed exertions of those who had not yet fallen into the hands of Government, involved him in scenes of constant turmoil. One calamity after another fell on the society in quick succession, and Neilson had the pain of seeing his dearest friends consigned to prison, and the affairs of the Union every moment requiring increased energy to prevent their total

ruin. Of his increasing activity there can be no doubt. We find the following evidence of the fact in the information of Maguan of Saintfield. "At a provincial meeting in Belfast, which he attended on the first of April, 1798, the Northern delegate who had been sent to Dublin, and just returned from that place, informed the meeting, that the leaders in Leinster were particularly active in organizing the Military Committee, as were also some of their Ulster friends who were at present there." He named Mr. Samuel Neilson in particular; he said, "he was riding almost day and night, organizing the people: and scarcely any person knew where he slept."

Mr. Sweetman, at whose house Neilson resided some time after his liberation, was arrested a few days subsequently to the seizure of the other leaders in Dublin. The same information which led to their apprehension had brought to the knowledge of Government that it was at his brewery in Francis-street, some of the most important meetings of the executive committee had taken place.

It was at one of these meetings that the serjeants of two regiments, then stationed in Dublin, attended, the men of one of which were then on duty at the Castle, waiting the decision of the committee, and after a long debate the determination was come to, to postpone the rising. One of the members, on whose authority the preceding account is given, conveyed the decision of the committee to the persons in attendance at the door of the place of meeting, and the emphatic reply of the latter was, (with the addition of an oath,) "Then all is lost."

At one of those meetings, shortly before the 12th of March, Mr. Thomas Reynolds attended. This gentleman was then evidently making his arrangements for the disposal of his associates. Mr. Sweetman was not present at the meeting. One of the subjects that was discussed was the adoption of a proposal for the fabrication of pikes of a new form which Reynolds recommended. He inquired for Mr. Sweetman, and expressed a desire to have the drawing of the proposed weapon submitted to the latter. The plea for his concurrence was the ingenuity and talent which Mr. Sweetman was known to possess in mechanics.

Mr. Sweetman, who was then attending to his business in the brewery, was accordingly sent for at the desire of Reynolds. He came into the room where the members were assembled, and Reynolds, placing the drawing of the weapon in his hand, asked his opinion of the advantage of the proposed change of form. Mr. Sweetman said he had no fault to find with it, and without further communication returned to his business. The object of Reynolds was gained, he had procured the attendance of another important person at the meeting, and nothing more was requisite for his implication. The circumstance was communicated by Mr. Sweetman to a member of his family, on whose unquestionable authority it is stated.

In Neilson's report of his examination before the Secret Committee he states, "that after the arrests at Bond's, he was very active in procuring the vacancies to be filled up which that day's arrest had

occasioned, attended several committees belonging to the Union, delivered some messages from Lord Edward Fitz-Gerald, and, together with his Lordship, was stopped by a patrol near Palmerston, and liberated, after being a short time in custody, owing to the ignorance of the officer respecting our persons." Previously to the arrests in the spring of 1798, he visited the Dargle and Tinnahinch along with Mr. Bond and Mr. Sweetman, and was accompanied to the former place by Mr. Grattan, but "had no political conversation of the slightest importance with Mr. Grattan." "He did not recollect being at Tinnahinch, in company with any other person shortly after." But immediately after his return to Newgate, he wrote a letter to the Lord Chancellor, correcting his evidence on this point, and stated that he recollected having been at Tinnahinch in the company of Hughes. The particulars of this interview, which took place between the 20th and 29th of April, have been already given in the preceding series of this work. In Lord Edward's several places of concealment he was frequently visited by Neilson,* and at one of these especially, which had hitherto been unnoticed,

* During the two months of Lord Edward's concealment in Dublin, Neilson was actively engaged in bringing intelligence of the movements of Government to his Lordship, conveying his instructions to the different leaders in the city and its vicinity, and in attending various committees, and communicating with delegates from the north. One of these northern delegates was John Hughes, a bookseller of Belfast, of whom I have given some account in a former volume, and who remained unsuspected by any of his associates for some time subsequently to the arrests of Lord Edward and Neilson, although then, and long previously, a Government informer.

the house of Mr. Bartholomew Gannon, a linen-draper, No. 22, Corn-market, where, on his removal from Moore's, he remained for some days. I am informed by the daughter of Moore (Mrs. M'Cready) that it was at Gannon's she last saw Lord Edward. This lady states that when his Lordship was concealed at her father's, Neilson's visits were frequent there, and appeared to give his Lordship more pleasure than those of any other of his associates. That at times his spirits seemed weighed down, but to use the words of this lady, "the moment Neilson made his appearance, Lord Edward appeared like a new man; his features brightened up, and he spoke with all his natural vivacity." There are probably few persons living who had better opportunities of forming an opinion of the estimation in which Lord Edward held his different associates than this lady, and on her authority I am able to state, that Lord Edward habitually spoke of Neilson as of one in whose energy, boldness, and honesty, he could place his entire trust. These qualities, no doubt, were too congenial to his own, to fail of securing his esteem for Neilson, but it would be a folly to deny that his habits and turn of mind were not calculated to enable him to cope with the difficulties, or to obviate the dangers with which his situation was surrounded. If Neilson, however, was deficient, like some other of his associates, in caution, there was a want of energy on the part of other leaders no less injurious to their cause.

The efforts, however, of the Directory to repress or to inspirit their followers, as the occasion seemed

to require, had the effect of neutralizing the objects of the society, and kept them vibrating at intermediate points between the positive and negative qualities of ardour and inactivity, and the result of the influence thus exerted, was to paralyze their enterprize. In estimating the conduct of Neilson subsequently to the arrests at Bond's, the desperate circumstances of the society are to be taken into account. Success or failure, in similar circumstances, usually stamps the character of intrepidity or rashness on the movements of the actors in the struggle. While we admit the imprudence of Neilson's frequent visits to Lord Edward, of his night excursions with his Lordship to make their preparatory disposition of the attack on the capital, of the meditated liberation of the prisoners, the act of reconnoitring one of the jails, to the officers of which his person must have been familiar,—we must bear in mind that our opinion is formed of these matters after the event, and when the issue of them had proved unfortunate.

The question of their legal criminality, whatever might have been the result, admits of no doubt. The consequence of his last unfortunate visit to Lord Edward, were hardly less fatal to the latter, than they were destined to prove injurious, for a time, to the fame of Neilson. Justice, however, ultimately triumphs over all injuries.

The details of Lord Edward's arrest are too well known to need repetition. It is sufficient to say that Neilson visited him at Murphy's on the 19th of May, saw a party of soldiers pass up the street about the middle of the day, and gave notice of their ap-

pearance. He dined at Murphy's in company with Lord Edward, and after the cloth was removed, as if suddenly recollecting himself, hurried out of the room, and left the house. By Murphy's account he was absent about an hour, when Major Sirr and his party, finding the door open by which Neilson had gone out, entered the house, and, after a desperate struggle, effected the capture of the best, the noblest, the bravest of his band. Lord Edward's arrest following so immediately Neilson's exit, his restlessness during dinner, his "fidgetty" demeanour at the moment of leaving the house, and the strange circumstance of the door being found open by Major Sirr, were circumstances that caused Neilson's conduct to be freely canvassed; and those who were in the secret of the treachery which really led to the capture of the prisoner, took care to let suspicion light and rest on those whom it was thought desirable to bring into odium with their own party. Neilson and Murphy were made the scape-goats of the memorable F. H., whoever the traitor was, the infamy of whose name is coupled with those initials.

With respect to Neilson, Mr. Moore, in a note appended to his account of the arrest, has stated that some share of the suspicion of having betrayed Lord Edward "had attached to him" (Neilson), but he has also stated the reasons that he deemed sufficient "to absolve him from any such suspicion;" and in a later edition of his work, he has still more fully expressed his conviction of Neilson's innocence of the charge that had been brought against him. The mere existence, however, of such a suspicion at any period,

and the length of time that had elapsed (upwards of 43 years) before any light had been thrown on the mystery in which the matter had been involved, had left traces of the doubts which were originally raised on insufficient grounds, and had been recently sought to be removed by inference drawn from character, in the absence of certain proof of the unfounded nature of those suspicions.

The last page in the former series of this work furnishes those facts, and if they had never been brought to light, the friends of Neilson might still have rested the defence of his memory on the opinion of his fidelity, entertained and expressed by his associates, and especially by M'Nevin and O'Connor, with whom he was intimately acquainted. I have ventured thus far on the subject,—further, perhaps, than the reader might think necessary, if justice only were due to the memory of the dead, and no amends were to be made to the injured feelings of the relatives of the deceased.*

* Vide Appendix. Statements of O'Connor, M'Nevin, Rowan, Teeling, Hope, and Felix Rorke.

CHAPTER VII.

The general rising which had been so often postponed for various reasons, was at last fixed for the 23rd of May. Lord Edward Fitzgerald had planned all the military operations. He was looked upon as the leader, who once having joined the men of Leinster, was to have sent forth his orders to the Committees of the different counties for the people to rise *en masse*. His arrest on the 19th, then, was the greatest blow which could have fallen on his cause. On the 21st, Henry and John Shears were arrested, and no Leinster leaders of any eminence then remained at large.

Neilson, seeing all these calamities, determined that on the night of the 23rd he would make an effort to liberate the leaders, and hazard all hopes of success on an attack on Newgate, where Lord Edward was confined.

From his long confinement in the Dublin prisons he had become intimately acquainted with their interior arrangement and construction, and so far was qualified to carry the proposed plan of attack into execution.

But to the success of that effort it was necessary to ascertain the height of the walls, at that part where they were to be scaled;* and to obtain this knowledge with accuracy, he boldly, and, as the result proved, most imprudently determined to reconnoitre the prison; and while he was intently engaged in estimating the height of the building from the number of tier of mason-work in the wall, he was observed by Gregg, the jailer, who, calling a file of soldiers to his assistance, immediately seized on Neilson, and after a desperate struggle on the part of the latter, lodged him in jail.

It was only the day previously to Neilson's arrest that a proclamation, dated the 22nd of May, was issued, offering a reward of 300*l.* for the apprehension of each of the following persons, charged with high treason, viz.: Samuel Neilson, of Belfast, merchant; Richard M'Cormick, poplin and stuff manufacturer; John Chambers, printer; Edward Rattigan, timber-merchant; John Cormick, feather-merchant; William Lawless, surgeon; Thomas Trevor, shipowner; and Michael Reynolds, of Naas, in the county of Kildare. Mr. Grattan† states, "when Neilson was taken, his clothes were torn off him, his body wounded all over by the soldiers hacking at him, he was cut and scarred in upwards of fifty places, and was only saved by the number of his assailants."‡

* This account of his intended mode of attack was given by Neilson to his family, but as to the fact of his having scaling ladders in readiness, we have no information on that point.

† Life and Times of Henry Grattan, vol. iv., p. 369.

‡ When S. N. was seized by Gregg and a corporate guard, a gentle-

Neilson's arrest prevented the meditated attack on the prison. A large number of persons had assembled according to his appointment in the barley fields where Mountjoy Square now stands, early in the evening; but as Neilson did not return to them, they dispersed without making any further attempt.

In planning this attack on the prison, and determining in favour of it, Neilson evidently had the effects of the capture of the Bastile in recollection, and had determined on following the course which had proved successful at the outbreak of the French revolution.

This plan, it is to be remembered, was essential to the objects which Lord Edward had in view, and it would have been completely frustrated if the leaders whose co-operation was required had remained in the hands of Government; and thus the seizure of persons of distinction whom it was intended to detain as hostages would be of no advantage to the insurgents. Before Lord Edward's arrest, Neilson had formed a plan of attacking Kilmainham, where the other state prisoners were confined, as referred to in the letter which John Sheares had written to dissuade him from it. What the nature of that plan was, we have no data to determine. Neilson states that the writer of that letter was not aware of his plans when he wrote to him.

On the 11th of June, Samuel Neilson received

man was passing. S. N. pulled a parcel of papers out of his pocket, and handing them to the gentleman, said, "Sir, I know you to be a magistrate, do not suffer me to be pillaged by these miscreants." The gentleman, whom he never saw before, took them, and evidently understood the ruse.

notice for trial. On the 26th of June, bills of indictment were sent up for high treason against Samuel Neilson, the two Sheares, John M'Cann, William Michael Byrne, and Oliver Bond. These persons were brought into court, and bills were found against them, and they were desired to name such counsel and agents as they chose to be assigned to them. Counsel and agents were accordingly named by all the prisoners, except by Neilson, who refused to name any. Mr. Grattan, in his Memoirs of his father, has given a graphic description of Neilson's demeanour on this occasion. "When brought into the court, the noise of his entrance was like the march of men in irons. He was called on to plead, and asked if he had anything to say; he replied, in a stentorian voice, 'No! I have been robbed of everything; I could not fee counsel; my property, every thing, has been taken from me;' and he turned away, but he came again to the front of the dock, and said, 'For myself, I have nothing to say; *I scorn your power, and despise that authority, that it shall ever be my pride to have opposed;* but I may say—not that I value it—why am I kept with these weighty irons on me, so heavy that three ordinary men could scarcely carry them? Is it your law that I should be placed in irons, and in such irons?'

"Lord Carleton, who was one of the judges, called up the jailer (Gregg) to account for this: he said, 'It is true, my Lord, he is in irons, and in such irons as I would not think of putting on any two men; but it was necessary, my life was attempted, I was not safe.'

"Neilson interrupted him. 'Your life! I scorned to take it. I did not resist till I was nearly torn in pieces, and in defence of myself I resisted; I would *scorn* to take your life.' And he looked at Gregg with savage contempt."

He refused to engage counsel to defend him; his trial, however, did not come on, and he was included in the list of exiles that went into banishment.

Curran, who had undertaken his defence, went to see him in prison. "He was loaded with chains, but his mind was firm and undaunted, and his spirits as buoyant as in the days of prosperity; fear never entered into his composition."

All the prisoners indicted on the 11th of June, with the exception of Neilson, were put on their trial and capitally convicted; and all of those tried, with the exception of Bond, were executed. The dates of those trials and executions are deserving of particular attention, bearing, as most of them do, on the history of the compact entered into between the state prisoners and the Government, a transaction of great importance, whether as regarded its contemplated object, its consequences, or the characters of those who were parties to it. The papers of three of the state prisoners who were principally connected with it have been placed in my hands by their surviving relatives, and I am thus enabled to give a detailed account of that transaction, drawn up at the time by each of them, far more comprehensive and circumstantial than any that has hitherto appeared. On the 12th of July, Henry and John Sheares were tried, and executed on the 14th. On the 17th of July,

John M'Cann was tried, and executed on the 19th. William Michael Byrne was tried on the 20th of July, and was executed on the 28th. Oliver Bond was tried on the 23rd of July, and capitally convicted, and was respited on the 26th.

Neilson states, that the first proposal to enter into terms with Government, was made to him by his attorney, Crawford, "the middle of July." The proposal was taken into consideration by Neilson, and on the 22nd of July, Mr. Dobbs, a member of the Irish Parliament, took on himself the office of mediator between the Government and the prisoners, and entered into negotiation with Neilson on their part. On the following day, the 23rd of July, Mr. Dobbs communicated with Lord Castlereagh, and his lordship said, before anything was determined on, "the result of Bond's trial must be first known."

On the 27th of July a Government official, Mr. Alexander, communicated with Bond, and undertook, at his desire, to ascertain at the Castle how the proposal would be received; and at his suggestion Neilson drew up a paper stipulating for the lives of Byrne and Bond; and on that day Mr. Dobbs and the sheriffs went round the prisons and got the names of several of the prisoners to it. *The day following, Byrne was executed, pending the negotiation.* The reason given for Byrne's execution was, that all the prisoners had not signed the agreement. Arthur O'Connor states that he was applied to on the 24th by Mr. Dobbs and one of the sheriffs, who brought the agreement signed to him by seventy of the state prisoners, and for reasons fully detailed in his letter

to Lord Castlereagh, he refused to sign it. On the 28th the order was received at the prison for Bond's execution on the day following; and the same day, at the instance of Neilson, the negotiation, which was considered virtually annulled by the execution of Byrne, was again renewed, with the view, principally, on the part of Neilson, of saving the life of his friend Bond, and with a full expectation on the part of the other prisoners of putting a total stop to the effusion of blood. The agreement was again taken round the prisons, and received the signatures of all of them, with the exception of Roger O'Connor and William Dowdall.

In a matter of such moment to the characters of all the parties concerned in this transaction, I confine myself to a bare statement of facts, and the exhibition of documents of unquestionable authenticity, from which the reader will draw his own inferences.

CHAPTER VIII.

The following statement was drawn up by Samuel Neilson, in Fort George, and was given by him to a lady of the name of Prisk, to be delivered to his family: it was sewed up in her under-dress, to avoid discovery, and was thus conveyed to Mrs. Neilson:—

"The subscriber (lying, as he is, in the power of a Government whose treatment of him for the eight years past leads him to be prepared for the worst at their hands) feels it his duty to leave behind him, in case of death or perpetual banishment, an abridged record of the principal facts which relate to the negotiation of 1798, between the state prisoners and Government, in order that his friends and countrymen may have the necessary materials whereon to form their judgment respecting that transaction in which he was the first mover.

"His own peculiar persecutions, previous to this period, would furnish materials for a volume. He passes them over, because he never wishes to be in the front ground upon paper.

"The transactions which immediately preceded and led to the insurrection of the 23rd of May, he declines

stating at present, for reasons that are obvious. He will only say, that its failure, as is customary on every such occasion, has enabled the voice of slander to condemn it, whilst the principal planner and many of his coadjutors are, alas, no more! They have died for their country; and he hopes yet to assist in recovering their memories from the imputations of pretended friends, who had abandoned Ireland in this time of her utmost need.

"It is necessary to state how he himself stood at the commencement of the negotiations. He had been served with a copy of the indictment; he had been brought up from his cell in irons to have counsel assigned; he refused to name any, lest he might, in any degree, give his concurrence to the transactions of a Court which, he said, 'he looked upon as a sanguinary tribunal for conviction and death, and not for trial:' stating further, 'that to him it appeared that justice had slid off her base, which had been taken possession of by brutal force.' He was afterwards brought up and arraigned; next day his cell was searched, and the outline of the *defence* he intended to make was found concealed under a flag, and carried off in triumph to the Castle. It went on the ground of *justification*, expressed in the strongest manner he could find language for, and proposed to plead guilty to every count in the indictment, provided they would expunge the obnoxious appellations. His trial was immediately put off, *sine die*, and a few days after he was again brought up, when, at the pressing request of his friends, particularly of Mr. Curran, he acquiesced in the nomina-

tion of counsel and agent, who had immediate access to him in consequence; and one and all assured him, that so far as they could learn, there was not evidence to be adduced against him that could in any way affect his life. This he states, in order to satisfy every person, that *his own case* had no concern whatever in the transaction.

"Those who know him best will readily give him credit, when he says, that the failure of the insurrection, and the daily execution of his virtuous friends in town and country, martyrs to the same cause, had, so far from creating a terror of death, actually made life *a burthen to him.* He further declares, that so far as he knows, there was not a prisoner who took part in this measure, but was actuated chiefly, if not solely, by considerations of a nature far from selfish or personal: by far the greater part of them were, and had long been, imprisoned merely on suspicion; nor was there any idea whatever of bringing them to trial at that or at any other time."

NARRATIVE OF FACTS.

"Mr. Crawford, the attorney who was appointed my agent, had access to my cell from the middle of July. He made me acquainted with the state of the country, and from him I learned the entire failure of the insurrection. He told me of the unavailing resistance which was still made in some districts, and the consequent spilling of blood. He saw that I was sensibly affected by his statements, and he proposed to me the idea of communicating with Government on the means of restoring tranquillity. I was very

distrustful of Government, and hesitated for several days. He at length told me he had reason to believe that the proposition would be met half way, and that he was convinced Lord Charlemont (whose honour was unimpeached) would undertake to obtain a satisfactory guarantee to whatever terms might be agreed upon. I rather yielded to the proposition, and gave him permission to wait on Lord Charlemont accordingly.

"In the mean time I wrote a note to Arthur O'Connor, then confined in Bridewell, with which prison I happened to have the means of communicating, stating the outline of the proposed plan. He immediately replied to me in warm terms of approbation; but from an expression in his note it appeared that he had not concurred to the full extent of the idea. I immediately explained to him in a second note, and stated my opinion precisely and to the extent afterwards adopted. To this, I received a reply rather hesitating. On the 22nd, I again saw Mr. Crawford; he told me that Lord Charlemont highly approved of the measure, but from his age and infirmity declined taking an active part in the business himself, but that Mr. Dobbs, his friend, would cheerfully undertake to conduct the negotiation. I readily acquiesced, as I had long known Mr. Dobbs, and had a high opinion of his integrity. The executions were going on rapidly under the commission then sitting; Byrne was under sentence of death, and Bond was to be tried the next day: of course no time was to be lost. I empowered Mr. Crawford to call immediately on Mr. Dobbs, and

desire him to communicate with Government on the subject. Mr. Dobbs did not see Lord Castlereagh until next morning, the 23rd, at half-past ten o'clock. At this time, Bond's trial had commenced, and he (Mr. Dobbs) was told that the result of the trial must be known in the first instance. Bond was condemned on the following morning, a necessary consequence of accusation before a tribunal when the law of treason was so extended as to embrace the population of the land, and whose juries were sanguinary Orangemen. He was conducted to Newgate, the same prison in which I was. I testified to the turnkey an anxious wish to see my old and intimate friend previous to his death.

"This wish found its way to Sheriff Pasley, who, actuated by motives of humanity, ventured to take me to the place where Byrne and Bond were confined. I then met the other sheriff, and Mr. Alexander, from the Castle, who, being a relation of Bond's, and probably having known of the communication through Mr. Dobbs, had called to see him. I asked Bond if he had heard anything upon the subject: neither he nor Byrne knew anything of it. I stated the plan and its object in a few words; every person present approved of it. Bond and Byrne gave it their approbation, as tending to stop the general effusion of blood, but insisted that their own particular cases should not be considered as of any importance in the general question. I was requested by Mr. Alexander to put it into writing. Bond proposed that Mr. Alexander should first inquire at the Castle how the measure would be received: this proposal was immediately embraced by

Mr. Alexander, and he left us. On his return, he spoke rather ambiguously, but recommended it to us still to put our thoughts on paper. I then drew up the first paper, which included the names of Bond and Byrne, and which was approved of by Government; and Mr. Dobbs, with the sheriffs, went round the different prisons with it for signatures, by the desire of Government. Notwithstanding this, Byrne was executed the next day!

"On the 26th, Mr. Dobbs called upon us after Bond's respite, and said that though most of the prisoners had signed, yet some had refused, and that Government held it essential that *all* should sign. Mr. Cooke came to us, and fully confirmed Mr. Dobbs's statement, and excusing Byrne's execution on that account. He also told me that I had liberty to go with Mr. Dobbs to the other prisons, and converse with those who hesitated. I accordingly accompanied him to Bridewell, when I succeeded in obtaining the signatures required. That evening Mr. Dobbs met Lord Castlereagh, and found, to his astonishment, that some new difficulties were thrown in the way.

"On Saturday, the 28th, Mr. Dobbs brought us a message from the Castle, that the original terms would not be adhered to by Government, unless the prisoners would agree to give up the names of their associates, &c. This second breach of a solemn agreement astonished us, but the ignominious proposal still more. I was again allowed to go round to the prisoners to consult with them, and we returned an unanimous expression of abhorrence at the proposal. This most extraordinary message induced in the prisoners a belief that some

unprincipled and bloody man assumed the name and authority of Government, and that an immediate communication with the Lord Lieutenant himself by a delegation from the prisons might do away the misunderstanding. This proposal was acceded to by Government, with only this difference, that our delegates were to meet the ministers instead of the Lord Lieutenant, and the prisoners of Bridewell nominated A. O'Connor; those of Kilmainham, Emmett and M'Nevin, which was confirmed by the prisoners in Newgate. They accordingly met the Lord Chancellor, Lord Castlereagh, and Mr. Cooke, on Sunday, the 29th, when a new agreement, upon the same principles with the original one, was finally and solemnly entered into. One reason with me for proposing M'Nevin and O'Connor to go on this mission was, that Bond and I understood, in a conversation we had with Mr. Cooke at Newgate, that they were two of the persons Government wished particularly to examine. O'Connor did not sign the original agreement until after Byrne's execution, and Bond's respite."

The following is a copy of the agreement finally arranged on the 29th of July.

"That the undersigned state prisoners in the three prisons of Newgate, Kilmainham, and Bridewell, engage to give every information in their power of the whole of the internal transactions of the U. Irishmen; and that each of them shall give detailed information of every thing that has passed between the U. I. and foreign states; but that the prisoners are not, by naming or describing, to implicate any

person whatever, and that they are ready to emigrate to such country as shall be agreed upon between them and Government, and give security not to return to this country without the permission of Government, and not to pass into any enemy's country: if, on so doing, they are to be freed from prosecution, and also Mr. Bond be permitted to take the benefit of this proposal. The state prisoners also hope that it may be extended to such persons in custody, or not in custody, as may choose to benefit by it.

"*Dublin, 29th July*, 1798."

"The last clause, which is in fact the *spirit* of the agreement, was intentionally worded in this loose manner at the instance of Government, to save appearances on their side; for it was particularly and expressly conditioned and settled, that Government was pledged to this point; and upon its being desired to have the particular expression more precise, the Chancellor said, "*It comes to this, either you must trust us, or we must trust you. A Government which could violate engagements thus solemnly made, neither could stand, nor deserved to stand.*" Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Cooke concurred, and declared, in the strongest manner, that the whole of what had been agreed upon should be adhered to with the utmost liberality and good faith on the part of Government.

"Before I proceed to state the fidelity with which this engagement was fulfilled on our part, I think it right to give my opinion of its amount; an opinion

which experience has proved to have been right. It was then, to the Government (if they had availed themselves of it with liberality and good faith), present *tranquillity*. It was to the Union, *salvation*. So our enemies very soon understood it, as will hereafter appear by their conduct; but this can be no excuse for their violation of all faith. If they acquired nothing from our disclosure which they did not know before, that is nothing to the question with *them*, though much to our countrymen. It is nothing against us that an open avowal of the truth was neither more nor less than a complete justification of the Union.

"On the evening of the same day when the agreement was finally concluded at the Castle, Lord Castlereagh told Messrs. O'Connor, Emmett, and M'Nevin, that he expected they would draw up and present in writing an account of the rise, progress, and proceedings of the United Irishmen; together with their connexions with foreign states; and that such account should be considered as a full and complete accomplishment of the compact on the part of the Union. This demand was, after some hesitation, agreed to by them; and they accordingly drew up and presented a memoir of the Union (detailing its origin, plans, and proceedings), signed by each, and dated the 4th of August, 1798.

"On the 6th of August, Mr. Cooke called at Kilmainham, when Emmett and M'Nevin were confined, and said, Lord Cornwallis had *read* the memoir, but could not *receive* it without being

altered; at the same time producing it as if to return to them.

"They asked him whether it was not a performance on their part of the *agreement with Government? He confessed it was*, but said it was so written as to be a justification of the United Irishmen. They answered that it would be impossible for them to write any statement of their transactions that would not be a justification of that body. He then said, 'I suppose if Government were to publish *part* of this memoir, you would publish the remainder;' they answered, 'Most probably we should;' 'Then,' said he, 'we should be obliged to *hire* some person to answer it; you would reply to him; and so a paper war would be carried on between you and us.' After a good deal of conversation to the same effect, they told him they could give him no decisive answer as to any alteration, until they were all together, (O'Connor being then in Bridewell,) but in the mean time, out of respect to his Excellency they would look over the memoir; but confessed there was no part of it which they thought could be altered. Mr. Cooke then took his leave, carrying along with him the copy which he had brought: next morning Mr. O'Connor was permitted to go from Bridewell to Kilmainham, in order to confer with the others; but just as they were about to set down and look over the memoir, M'Nevin received a note from Mr. Cooke, informing him that in consequence of the conversation of yesterday, he would be examined that day at two o'clock before

the Committee of the Lords. Thus Government contrived a mode of giving, under parliamentary sanction, such evidence as they should think proper to garble and select from such of the prisoners as they examined; and here will be seen a clue to all the misrepresentations of evidence and facts which remain uncontradicted, because these prisoners were in close custody, and they are kept in close custody, lest they should be contradicted.

"Nearly two weeks had elapsed after the agreement was concluded, during which we in Newgate read accounts daily of murders and other cruelties committed in Wicklow, where a body under Holt still held out, and elsewhere, chiefly by the yeomen: we also understood that some Courts Martial were still proceeding on the trials of those concerned, or suspected of being concerned, in the late insurrection. In short, while our friends were suffering on the one hand, Government on the other had not availed itself of the measure to pacify the country. Bond and I complained of this to Mr. Alexander, who occasionally called to see him, and he, after stating at the Castle what we said, desired us to commit our thoughts to paper, and they would be taken into consideration. We immediately forwarded the following suggestion to Mr. Cooke:—

"'It is to be premised that all communications on the present state of the country are to be confidential, explicit, and calculated to restore harmony by concessions on the part of Government, and obedience on the part of the people.

"'First, then, we are of opinion that, in order to

tranquillize the pulic mind, there should be an immediate and *universal amnesty*, together with general *liberation of the prisoners* in the different jails and tenders who are charged with treason or treasonable practices; Government pointing out such excepted persons as they wish to leave the country, and who may prefer emigration to imprisonment or trial.

"'We think this step will so prepossess the people in favour of Lord Cornwallis's government, that they will cheerfully listen to any proposals which may be made for the restoration and continuance not only of tranquillity, but mutual confidence.

"'With respect to the persons who may be chiefly instrumental in the different counties, to effectuate this desirable object, we think an immediate correspondence should be opened with them by such prisoners as approve of this measure, and will voluntarily assist in it. We, on our part, are willing to do every thing in our power to carry it into effect.

(Signed) 'Oliver Bond.
'Samuel Neilson.

"'*New Prison, 8th August*, 1798.'

"Two or three days after this had been sent to the Castle, Mr. Dobbs called upon us, and showed upon this, as indeed upon every other occasion, his ardent desire to co-operate in every plan that could be suggested to put a stop to bloodshed and cruelty. He had been conversing with some confidential person at the Castle upon the subject, and proposed our sending down some persons to Wicklow, whose character

would gain them credit with the insurgents who still held out.

"We acceded to the proposal, and promised to look out for two gentlemen of the description he mentioned, but stated, that in the first place we must have for them the most explicit and absolute protections; and, in the next place, unconditional pardons for such insurgents as they would bring in. To this Mr. Dobbs not only acceded, but philanthropically proposed that he himself would set off with them the moment he got the necessary papers and letters from Government to General Moore, who commanded in the disturbed district.

"The mission had the desired effect; vast numbers came in, and the Orange persecution was completely put a stop to for that time and in that county. Here it is necessary to say, that there did appear, from the completion of the negotiation down to about the middle of August, or even later, a disposition on the part of Government to act with, at least, tolerable fairness and honour respecting the spirit of our agreement; but towards the end of that month they began to forget both the spirit and letter of it, and went on so to do until the final abandonment of every shadow of honour, truth, and justice. I must also say, that however unjustifiable such a breach of the most solemn engagement is, I am led, from a great variety of circumstances, to impute it more to my intemperate and bloodthirsty countrymen of the Orange faction, than to the English Government; for on the 18th of August Mr. Cooke brought us a message that Government were fully satisfied we had

acted with good faith, and they were ready to act honourably on their part, and of course we were at liberty to go where we pleased, provided we left the British dominions; and that the only thing now to be settled was, the nature of the accommodation we wished for in order to settle our affairs; some were ready to go promptly, and some required a short time to dispose of their effects and prepare themselves for an eternal adieu to Ireland.

"In the interim the whole newspapers of the capital opened with the most barefaced and unqualified abuse of us, one and all. The grossest falsehoods were published under the title of evidence given by us before the secret committee of the Lords and Commons; and on the first attempt, by an advertisement, to repel these falsehoods, we were all put once more into solitary confinement, and strangers forbidden access to us. This advertisement was as follows:—

"'Having read in the different newspapers publications pretending to be abstracts of the report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, and of our depositions before the committees of Lords and Commons; we feel ourselves called upon to assure the public that they are gross, and, to us, astonishing misrepresentations, not only unsupported by, but in many instances directly contradictory to, the facts we really stated on these occasions. We further assure our friends, that in no instance did the name of any individual escape from us; on the contrary, we always refused answering such questions as might tend to implicate any persons whatever, conformably

to the agreement entered into by the state prisoners with Government.

(Signed) 'Arthur O'Connor.
'Thos. Addis Emmett.
'Wm. Jas. M'Nevin.'

"My name would have appeared in this advertisement also, if the gentleman who had it could have got access to the prison in which I was, for I had the same cause of complaint, though little hopes of contesting with Government *at that time* in the Irish press. Our real examinations, which had taken place before the committees of the Lords and Commons, are in the hands of our friends; mine, which is in the hands of ————, was as follows:

EXAMINATION OF S. NEILSON.

9th August, 1798.

"'Is an United Irishman, has been so since the year 1791, was early and active in promoting the organization; was a member of the Dublin and Belfast *first* societies. That of Dublin had no concern whatever in commencing the organization; the meetings of both had ceased previous to the commencement of the latter: does not precisely recollect the period when the organization, as at present established, had its first beginning, but thinks it was very soon after Government issued their proclamation against the Volunteers in 1793. It commenced among some junior societies in Belfast, without any connexion with, or countenance from, the *original* societies of

1791; the first society of Belfast, however, afterwards adopted the system, without any communication with the society in Dublin, or any persons of any persuasion in that place; on the contrary, it was very slowly they came into the measure, and not until the province of Ulster was completely organized. The system was completed in the summer of 1795, and it had spread very little in or about Dublin, till the winter 1796-7. The *original object* was solely that contained in the test; namely, *Equality of representation, without distinction, on account of religion;* the ideas of a *republic, and separation,* grew out of the severities practised by Government upon the people; is positive that the measures of Government induced the people to despair of any reform through the constituted authorities, and to look abroad for aid.

"'Has heard of a letter of an early date, written by Mr. Tone on this subject; does not speak of Mr. Tone's opinion at any period, but of the public mind, and is positive that the only object of the Union at first was as before stated; latterly, a separation from England, and a republic, were the universal objects. There was early an idea of alarming Government into a reform, but that hope had been long abandoned.

"Knew that there were communications held abroad, not, however, of himself, but from those in whom he could confide; knew nothing of any agent at Lisle, but has no doubt of there being a resident agent at Paris. Knew Lord Edward Fitzgerald; does not think he was extremely confident of an invasion: his reason for this opinion is, that he would have laboured more assiduously to persuade the people to *suffer* on

rather than *resist;* besides, often heard him express a desire that Ireland should accomplish her own liberation, rather than owe it to a foreign power. Does think France will invade these countries; cannot tell how they will act if they succeed; does not think they will use it as a conquered country; thinks they may act as they have done in other countries.

"'Was liberated in January or February last, on condition he should not become a member of any treasonable committee; took no part whatever after that in politics, previous to the arrest at Mr. Bond's, when he understood he was again to be cast into prison, if he could be found; after that, was very active in procuring the vacancies to be filled up which that day's arrest might have occasioned; attended several committees belonging to the Union; delivered some messages from Lord Edward Fitzgerald; was, together with his lordship, stopped by a patrol near Palmerstown, and liberated, after being a short time in custody, owing to the ignorance of the officer respecting our persons; has spoken thus freely of his lordship, because he is no more; but this moment it occurs to me, that his family may, by possibility, be injured, though he cannot; I will not, therefore, answer any other question respecting him. [Here an altercation took place between Lord Dillon and S. N., the former insisting on having an answer to every question, the latter warmly refusing to answer any that might implicate any person whatever: the Lord Chancellor interfering, said, '*Do you know, sir, where you are?*' S. N. replied, 'I do know where I am; I know you may send me back either to my cell

or to the scaffold; I am indifferent; but I will answer no question tending to implicate any person.']
There was a letter found in his pocket, signed I. S.; he cannot say positively who wrote it; the object of it was to dissuade him from an enterprise against Kilmainham Prison, but the author laboured under a mistake when he wrote it; there was an intention of attacking Newgate on the night of the 23rd of May; a principal end in view was the liberation of Lord Edward Fitzgerald; was in no official situation that night further than to give every advice and assistance, where either might be thought necessary; does not know of any intimacy between Lord Edward and the Shearses.

"'Does not think any numbers were *compelled* to become United Irishmen, but thinks many joined the Union because they thought it the strongest side; thinks it was the strongest side; thinks, had their affairs been well managed, they would have succeeded; cannot well account for the failure, but supposes they had a great loss in the imprisonment and absence of many of their leaders.

"'Was often at the Dargle and Tinnehinch, sometimes alone and sometimes in company; recollects being there in the spring of 1798, in company with Mr. Bond and Mr. Sweetman; saw Mr. Grattan that day, who obligingly accompanied us through the Dargle; had no political conversation of the slightest importance with Mr. G.; is certain not one word respecting the Union; does not recollect being there in company with any other person shortly after; cannot recollect; may have some time or other spoken

to Mr. Grattan on the subject of the Union, as he has done to any other public man who did not belong to the body, but is convinced that Mr. Grattan never had any the slightest connexion with the affairs of the Union; but though Mr. Grattan cannot be implicated, he must again put a stop to this kind of interrogatory, for other names may be mentioned, and his refusal to answer them would naturally lead to suspicion at least.

"'Thinks Government have latterly obtained some very correct information respecting the Union, but, in general, their information must have been exceedingly inaccurate. He has formed this opinion from various facts, but particularly from the nature of their arrests and prosecutions; thinks no more arrests necessary to restore quiet, but the system of lenity should be much farther extended, and the protections made absolute; thinks, also, that a radical change should take place in the magistracy. S. N. was then retiring, when Lord Kilwarden rose and said, 'Mr. Neilson, one moment—Were you to be consulted as to the best means of quieting the country, and keeping it quiet, how would you advise?' 'My lord, I am glad you asked that question, for it gives me an opportunity of giving a last opinion respecting the country I so much love. I say, then, (and I speak from a knowledge of the people, as well as a feeling of their sufferings,) to rule this country in quiet, you must complete the amnesty: *in a word*, you must govern by *public* opinion, and *not by force*.'

"'A few minutes after my return to Newgate, I recollected having been at Tinnehinch, in the com-

pany of Hughes, and I wrote a note to the chancellor, stating it.

(Signed) 'S. NEILSON.

'*Barnacle Lodge.*'

"This evidence, when compared with that published by the committees in their *Secret* Report, will show in the strongest light the enormity of those falsehoods hitherto passed upon the world as the real expressions which had dropped from us.

"During the prevalence of these mis-statements, and whilst my mind was ill at ease on account of the impossibility of publishing a refutation of them, I met on a sudden with one of the greatest calamities that can befall man. In a moment, and without the slightest previous illness, Bond, my intimate and much-loved friend, whose fate had been so deeply interwoven in all these transactions,—Bond, then my bed-fellow and partner in mind, fell down and expired. This fatal catastrophe happened on the morning of the 6th of September. I was at once overwhelmed with the most profound grief. It was not the loss of a common acquaintance, nor that of a patriot of a few months' standing which I had to deplore,—but the loss of a man with whom the closest intimacy for seventeen years had grown into the sincerest friendship. Bond was a patriot, whose devotion to liberty was coeval with his manhood; whose understanding was as sound as his integrity was inflexible; and whose early, useful, and active labours in *the cause* will be recounted with exultation by his children, and remembered with gratitude by his country, when those of ephemeral patriotism shall have passed away with its professors.

"I betook myself to the utmost privacy, and really grew sick of the society of man; my fellow-prisoners exerted themselves to soothe my sorrow, and had in some degree succeeded, when a new and unexpected vexation occurred; it was as follows:—

"On the 11th of September I happened to see the *Courier* (London newspaper) of the 6th of that month, containing a copy of an Act of Parliament then stated to be on its way through the Irish House of Commons. This was the bill which is now the law respecting us who had entered into the agreement with Government, and this London publication was the first notice we ever had of the measure—a fact well worthy the reflection of those who did not know the state of the Irish capital, the Irish press, and the Irish legislature, at this time. I immediately determined upon contradicting the false preamble of the bill, and wrote the following letter to the editor of the *Courier* for that purpose:—

"'SIR,

"'Having seen in your paper of the 6th inst. a publication purporting to be a copy of the bill now on its way through the Irish Parliament relative to the emigration of ninety persons in custody under charges of high treason, which states that they had acknowledged their *crimes*, retracted their *opinions*, and implored *pardon*, I think myself peculiarly called upon to set you right, by enclosing you a copy of the compact as settled between us and the Government, which cannot by any means authorize such a statement.

"'None of us, so far as I know, did either acknowledge *a crime*, retract an *opinion*, or implore *pardon*. Our object was to stop the effusion of blood.

'I am, Sir,

'Your most obedient servant,

'SAMUEL NEILSON.

'*New Prison, Dublin, Sept. 12th*, 1798.'

"On the morning of the 12th I enclosed a copy of this letter, together with the *Courier*, in the following note to Lord Castlereagh:—

"'MY LORD,

"'Feeling, in common with my fellow-prisoners, extremely hurt at a publication which tends to brand our names with infamy, I think it incumbent on me, who commenced the negotiation, to justify our characters and motives, by setting the whole in a true point of view. At the same time wishing to pay all due respect to Government, I trouble you with a copy of a letter which I mean to send off by this night's mail. I also take the liberty of sending the newspaper with the offensive passages *underscored*.

'I am, my Lord,

'Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

'SAMUEL NEILSON.'

"About one o'clock on the same day, Mr. Cooke, accompanied by Mr. Marsden, called upon me at Newgate. He held both letters and newspaper in his hand, and began by asking me rather freely, 'if I had lost my senses in taking such a step.' 'No,

Sir,' said I, 'though I understand *your* newspapers have taken my judgment from me some time ago, yet I feel I am in perfect possession of it.' 'But seriously, Mr. N., do you intend to publish this contradiction to the Act of Parliament?' 'I do, indeed, provided you do not assure me that *that* is an erroneous statement of the bill (pointing to the *Courier*, then in his hand.) Upon this he opened the paper, said he had not read it, and, handing it to me, desired me to read the offensive paragraphs. I did so, and pressed it upon him that they were *false*, inasmuch as we had neither confessed *crimes*, retracted *opinions*, nor implored *pardon*.

" He evaded the falsehoods, did not deny but that the bill was fairly reported, and endeavoured to justify it. I urged to him in reply, the disgrace that would hereafter attach to the Legislature, when it would be known to the world that they had passed an Act founded upon falsehood; supposing the prisoners' reputation totally out of the question. Mr. Marsden, in answer, laboured much to show me that a legislative falsehood might not be inconsistent with abstract moral truth. His argument did not weigh with me, and I again stated that it was impossible to permit such a proceeding to pass to the world and to posterity uncontradicted. 'Then,' said Mr. Cooke, 'you are determined to publish?' I told him, 'I was.' 'I am to inform you, then, that I am desired by His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant to say, that your doing so will be considered as a *breach of the contract*, and the executions will go on as formerly.' 'Why, Sir, as to executions, I have my mind made

up; I would rather suffer a thousand deaths than permit such a false statement to be thus solemnly recorded.' 'Do you know, Sir,' said he in a menacing tone, 'that *we can execute you without much difficulty?*' 'I do, Sir; I know your will is law, and to save you trouble, I would prefer you giving orders to Gregg, (the jailer) this instant to hang me out of the door, than acquiesce in such an abominable measure.' 'Oh, Sir, I see what offends you, you are anxious for the reputation of the prisoners; now your mind may be and I suppose is made up, but are you sure that all your fellow prisoners are equally determined?' 'I cannot say, nor is it material, for *they* can by no means be implicated in this act of *mine*.' 'Indeed they are, and I assure you, if you publish a *syllable* on the subject, it will equally affect them all.' 'Then I beg you may permit my fellow prisoners in this place to be present at the conclusion of this interview.' 'No,' replied he, (in terms of disrespect to them, which I was obliged to listen to, but shall not repeat.) 'Then, Sir, am I authorized to say that, *you come express from the Lord Lieutenant to tell me, that my publication stating the falsehoods on which the Act is founded, will be considered as a breach of the Treaty, and the executions will go on as formerly?*' 'You are, Sir, *if you publish at all;* that is my message.' I told him that I would take no further step until I consulted my fellow prisoners. He then told me he hoped to get some of the offensive passages in the bill softened, if it had not yet passed the Lords, and left me with a promise of immedi-

ately waiting on the Chancellor for that purpose. The prisoners (whom I consulted as secretly as I had an opportunity of doing,) feeling that it might occasion a renewal of all the miseries of the country, which were at that time suspended at least, did not authorize me to proceed any further, nor did I think myself warranted in publishing at such a risk. I heard no more of Mr. Cooke or the Chancellor, and the bill passed with all its deformity.

"From this moment I saw clearly there was no confidence whatever to be placed in the pledged faith of Government, and that their primary object was to blast our reputation. Having accomplished that object, however, as far as they could; and having, as it were, sent a certificate of villany before us, I still thought they would have fulfilled *one* stipulation, by letting us emigrate, as had been settled; *but no*—if once *out of their hands*, some of us might find means to publish to mankind the whole of this iniquitous transaction. They did not, however, at once, throw off the mask; but kept us in a cruel suspense until the 21st October, when we got notice at each of the prisons 'that we might immediately prepare to emigrate for America, but must give security *not to return to Europe*.' The very next day Mr. Marsden called and told me 'that some difficulties had been thrown in the way of our emigration to America, by the American minister in London; but that His Excellency had made such representations as, he was confident, would do away the objections.'

"Seven days afterwards, I received the following note:—

"'Mr. Marsden begs leave to inform Mr. Neilson, that in consequence of the objections which have been made to sending persons from hence to America, and which Mr. M. explained to Mr. N. at their last interview, Government are under the necessity of withholding permission for any of the prisoners to take their passage at present for America.

'*Dublin Castle, Oct. 29th,* 1798.'

"To which I sent the annexed answer:—

"'Sir,

"'I received your note of yesterday, stating, in substance, that we were, after being debarred Europe, also refused emigration to America.

"May I take the liberty of requesting that you will have the goodness to say if there is any country to which we may depart? If there is no such place, I must consider my imprisonment as durable as my existence, and the faith of the Irish Government as worse than Punic.

'I am, Sir,

'Samuel Neilson.

'*New Prison, Oct. 20th,* 1798.'

"To this I received no reply, nor did we hear anything more on the subject, until the 5th of December, when Mr. Marsden brought us a written message,

'That all the prisoners (except S. Neilson, Thomas Russell, T. A. Emmett, W. J. M'Nevin, Henry Jackson, Matthew Dowling, J. Sweetman, J. Cuthbert, John Sweeny, H. Wilson, Arthur O'Connor, John Chambers, Miles Duignen, John Cormick, and Deane Swift),' will be permitted to retire to *any neutral country on the Continent;* and that a pardon would be immediately passed accordingly. His Excellency (in this message) laments that *change of circumstances* has rendered the exception necessary; but hopes soon to do it away.'

"This message, like all the rest, was the most tantalizing duplicity and cruelty; for most of the very indulged prisoners rot in prison at this moment; and not one, I believe, has obtained the *indulgence* but through some powerful and peculiar interest.

"At this time, and during the whole of these transactions, the Irish press, under authority, teemed with the grossest and most abominable falsehoods, not only respecting the prisoners themselves, but also every person supposed to be connected with them in the most remote degree. The authorised perversion and falsification of their evidence, *which they were not allowed to contradict*, sanctioned the attacks of every anonymous pamphleteering cur, and Dublin particularly overflowed with these effusions. In one of them, which happened to fall into my hands, I observed with indignation, that my name and my evidence were so perverted and coupled with that of Hughes, a common informer, as to be made the foundation of the most unjust and illiberal treatment of

Mr. Grattan. I endeavoured in vain to get a few lines inserted in *any* Dublin paper, to stop this torrent against him. At length, with much difficulty, a friend in London obtained insertion of the following in the *Courier*:—

"'TO THE EDITOR.

"'SIR,

"'It appears to be the *occupation* of a certain party to calumniate the State prisoners. So far as their calumnies regard myself, I smile at them for the moment; time rolls on, and truth will one day be heard. In the mean time, however, I am particularly called upon, in vindication of a truly respectable character, whose conduct and principles have been basely vilified, to state thus publicly, that not one word ever fell from me which could, in the most remote degree, tend to support the accusations made against him, as the Committees of the Lords and Commons well know. And I cannot but say, that the coupling of my name with that of a common informer, whose testimony was in direct opposition to mine, even as given in a celebrated Report, is but a clumsy pretext for the traduction of virtue.

'S. NEILSON.

'*New Prison, 3rd Dec.*, 1798.'

"Thus matters remained until the morning of the 16th of January, 1799, when our respective prisons were rummaged closely for papers at day-break. A ruffian of the name of Carleton happened to be sent to the prison where I was, and he carried away every

scrap of paper he could lay his hands on in my room; indiscriminately bundling up my own private papers with those of several other persons, who had lain, and whose trunks were in the same room; most of these have never been returned, although repeatedly applied for.

"Another month had elapsed, when, on the 18th of March, in the evening, fourteen of us received notice to prepare to *go on board ship* the next morning at six o'clock! No intimation of what further destination was intended—all we could tell our friends, if we had been given time to have seen them, was that we were to *go on board ship* in a few hours, but whether for Botany Bay, Siberia, or to be scuttled and sunk, was alike unknown to us. On this occasion our astonishment was beyond description: some of us really thought it might have been a *piece of fun* practised upon us by the jailer—a kind of cruelty not unfrequent in these dreary abodes of *safe custody*. I was at this period confined to my bed by an intermittent fever, and having often experienced the most unexampled roughness from Gregg, (the jailer,) I really imagined he was making an experiment upon *my life*. I was not able to write, but I immediately dictated the following letter to Lord Cornwallis:—

"'My Lord,

"'I have received a message this moment from Mr. Cooke, through our jailer, stating that I am to be removed *to a ship* to-morrow morning at six o'clock. I am astonished at this notice, so entirely contradictory to the faith of Government solemnly

pledged; for though I wish to go abroad, yet I would desire to settle (as was agreed upon,) the place of exile, and the accommodations on board. It must occur to your lordship, that, at any rate, two or three days must be necessary to prepare for an eternal adieu to my native country, my wife and children. I thought the treatment I had received for the last seven years from Government might have satiated *any* revenge, without this additional piece of severity, and this additional breach of a solemn engagement. In the mean time, I request your lordship will have the goodness to state whether this order is authorized or not.

'I am, my Lord, &c.,

'SAMUEL NEILSON.

'*New Prison, March* 18*th*, 1799.'

"This letter was sent to the Castle late that night, and the prisoners were sent on board ship the next morning!

"Such is the narrative which I feel myself bound to leave with my countrymen. I have avoided argument as much as possible. I have not obtruded myself where it was not absolutely necessary; and I have not related a single word that is not strictly true, so far as my belief goes; and as to the facts within my own knowledge, I aver them to be strictly so. I therefore take leave of the subject for the present, with a consciousness of having discharged a most solemn duty in thus leaving a text book for the future historian.

"SAMUEL NEILSON."

CHAPTER IX.

The following narrative of the circumstances connected with the negotiations entered into between the Government and the State prisoners, and the events which led to the writer's being a party to it, was drawn up by Thomas Russell at Fort George, and communicated in a letter to his brother, Captain John Russell. The document is literally copied from the original, in the possession of a member of his family: the only omissions in it are of those parts of the letter which relate to family affairs.

"*Fort George, December* 10*th*, 1800.

"As I have never given you any account of what took place between the Government and myself during my imprisonment, and as I know what relates to me will, from the sentiments of blood and affection, interest you, I will briefly relate them, which is in some degree of consequence to my country, I mean the agreement entered into by the State prisoners with Government.

"Understanding that there was a warrant for high

treason issued against me, I surrendered to the Marquis of Downshire, on the 16th September, 1796, in Belfast; according to every appearance, the wish was, on the part of the gentlemen who that day conducted the arrests, (Lords Downshire, Westmeath, and Castlereagh,) that I should fly; for though the streets were filled with military, as if the town was to be given up to pillage, I was not noticed, though I was publicly in them, and, even on the full Exchange, for two hours after my residence was occupied by the military, and my papers seized by these noblemen: the same applies to my friend Samuel Neilson; *we* were the persons who were the principal objects of Government, for on our surrender, *which seemed to be unexpected*, the arrests stopped. I was the last. I surrendered to the chief magistrate of the town, whom I met as I was on my way to my house, where the magistrates civil and military were assembled. I was introduced by him to the Marquis of Downshire, as having surrendered to him. Lord Downshire said, pulling out some papers from his pocket, 'Mr. Russell, I have a warrant against you, it is for high treason.' I answered, 'My Lord, it is indifferent to me what warrant you have against me, or whether you have any; if you have, I shall not take the trouble of looking at it, for I have not the slightest curiosity on the subject.' Here Neilson asked me, 'Why did you not come before now: we have been waiting for *you?*' I answered, 'I waited to read the newspapers.' Shortly after this Lord Castlereagh entered, and *we** (with eight or nine others) were put

* T. R., and S. Neilson.

into separate chaises, and a dragoon with a cocked pistol, as a companion, in each: in this manner, escorted by a squadron of dragoons, we were conducted to Dublin, without quitting the carriages. We were committed to different jails, and to separate apartments, prevented from having intercourse with any person, and denied the use of pens and ink. My prison was Newgate. After some time, I was by two modes sounded, whether 'I would consent to leave the country and go to England,' which I peremptorily refused. I cannot affirm positively that this came from Government, but I believe it did. By degrees the extreme strictness of confinement was relaxed, and different persons were allowed access. A very scandalous libel appeared against me in the *Sun*, which I answered in the public prints, and at the same time apprised Mr. Cooke that I had done so. I should tell you that about a fortnight before my imprisonment, I had published a pamphlet on the state of the country, with my name annexed, and that shortly after I was in Newgate, I sent a copy of it to Mr. Cooke, with my compliments, informing him that it was written by me. He sent it back with 'his compliments, that he had already read it.' In time several of those arrested with me were, on different accounts, liberated. I wrote to Mr. Pelham, requesting trial or liberation, and received for answer, that I should be informed of the time of my trial as soon as possible. Towards the end of the summer of 1797, it was suggested to me by a gentleman, to offer to give security for my good behaviour, and that, in that case, he had no

doubt of obtaining my liberation; but *that* I refused, as implying that I had done something wrong, which I would never admit; he, however, did get a nobleman high in military command, and in the full confidence of the Government, and with whom I had no personal acquaintance, to apply to Mr. Pelham on the subject. Mr. Pelham spoke handsomely as to my *private* character, and said, that to prevent any uneasiness my friends might feel, he would say, that Government had *no specific charge* against me, but from my public character and conduct, were *determined* to keep me in prison during the *war*, at the same time expressing very exaggerated notions of my talents and influence: similar applications were made by others of my friends, (among them by Mr. Kirwan, the philosopher,) to Mr. Pelham and other members of Government, and similar answers returned. Thus I continued during the winter of 1797—8; in it Mr. Neilson was liberated, on account of his health,* and I was the only remaining prisoner (save one since dead) of those first arrested. Lord Castlereagh succeeded to Mr. Pelham in office, and I wrote to him, stating the circumstances and demanding 'trial, or to be liberated on bail.' His Lordship, in his answer, informed me that 'he had laid my application before the Lord Lieutenant, and that His Excellency was sorry that the circumstances of *the times* did not admit of his complying with it.' Thus I stood, and it is worthy of remark, as illustrative of the character of my countrymen and their fidelity to each other, that although there

* By a medical certificate.

was at this period no person whom the Government wished more to procure information against than myself; and though I was in the power of more individuals, particularly of that class whom it is the fashion to revile under the common epithets of common people and mob, than any man in my sphere of life; yet, as no information was obtained against me, in this manner I continued till July 1798, when Mr. M. Byrne and Mr. O. Bond were under sentence of death. The day before Mr. Byrne was to be executed, Mr. Neilson showed me a paper, purporting, that those who signed it agreed to give what information they individually possessed, without implicating others, and to leave the country, provided the lives of Mr. Byrne and Mr. Bond were saved: in their fate was involved all those found in Mrs. Bond's house on the 12th of March. I expressed great repugnance at the idea. He urged the propriety of endeavouring to put a stop to the useless effusion of blood; that the turn the war in the country had taken rendered it expedient to endeavour to effect some general means of amnesty, which would put an end to unavailing exertion and misery. I declined entering on anything relating to the general state of the country, but declared myself willing to do anything, or make any sacrifice, consistent with my conscience and honour, to save the blood of any individual. I will here mention, that through the whole of the business, I persisted in this distinction, for I was determined not to be accessary in advising any who had engaged in the contest to withdraw even for a moment from it, because I had and have the most perfect confi-

dence of the easiness of accomplishing the object wished for by the people; and Mr. Neilson, and the three gentlemen who, on the part of the prisoners, finally concluded the business with Government, appeared equally impressed with the necessity of the people being saved from the struggle. I mention this once for all, though out of the regular course of the narrative. In consequence of what Mr. Neilson proposed, the State prisoners on the side of the jail we were confined in —in Newgate—assembled, and Mr. Dobbs, and the two sheriffs, were present. Mr. Dobbs took the same view of the subject as Mr. Neilson, urged the useless effusion of blood, and spoke of this as a measure which, if adopted, would *probably* put a stop to it; at the same time he declared, that the idea did not proceed from the Government, but from the prisoners. It so happened that *I* was looked to as the person first to sign. To you who know me, it is needless to say how I felt, when I considered that my signing, *or not*, when that signature which could injure myself only, might possibly be the means of preventing bloodshed. I said I would sign the paper, if I were allowed 'to write my object in so doing above my name.' One of the sheriffs (Archer*) observed, that in that case, others would do the same, which would create great delay and difficulty; that it was growing late, and as the signatures were to be collected in the other prisons, and Mr. Byrne's execution was to take place the ensuing morning, and time would not be given to make the application to Government. I then said I would call on Mr. Dobbs and the sheriffs

* Such the name appears to be, so far as I can make it.

to witness the spirit (since things were thus situated) in which *I* agreed to sign, which would be equivalent to my expressing it in writing: to this they perfectly acceded. I am not now positive if Mr. Sheriff Pasley was present at this time, but Mr. Archer and Mr. Dobbs were. I then said that it was evident from my long imprisonment (then nearly two years, and during which I often asked for a trial and had been refused) that I had nothing personal to apprehend; that for the same reason, 'I could have nothing to disclose; that my sole motive in signing was, to save the blood of others; and that as a Christian, I did, in the most solemn manner, call my God and Saviour, by whom I was to be judged, to witness, that if *I* were myself under sentence of death, I would not sign that paper to save my life.' The gentlemen in question declared that they considered this declaration the same as if I had written it above my name, and under this precise and acknowledged definition of my motives, I signed the paper; and so terminated the greatest mental struggle I ever did, and I hope and believe ever will experience. The rest of the State prisoners then present then signed, all declaring that they did it in the same spirit I had done. There was not one of them, so far as I knew, or could judge, that did not think he thereby made a great personal sacrifice for the good of others; and so far as I could hear, I most firmly believe this sentiment was almost universal among the subscribers; and they consisted of men of very different classes of society, intellect, and acquirements, but of equal patriotism and fortitude; and if

ever a true account of the transaction becomes part of the history of our times and of our country, it will be recorded as an act of disinterestedness not often excelled. To any person who knew Ireland, it would be superfluous to say that the two prisoners, Mr. Byrne and Bond, were ready then, and on other occasions, to lay down their lives for the good of their country and mankind. The signatures (of the prisoners) in the other prisons were, with a few exceptions, obtained that night. I understand the whole proposition was considered the next day at a Privy Council. It, however, produced no effect; for, after some short delay, Mr. Byrne was executed. Mr. Bond's execution was to take place on the next day, Thursday. All the prisoners considered the paper as cancelled by the death (execution) of Mr. Byrne, and the death of Mr. Bond as inevitable. The Government, however, acted differently. At three o'clock a respite arrived for Mr. Bond until Monday. On Friday morning Mr. Cooke and Mr. Dobbs came to Newgate; and while Mr. Cooke was with Mr. Bond, Mr. Dobbs, in conversing with one of the State prisoners, found that the idea was that the *paper* was no longer *obligatory!* This I learned by Mr. Dobbs coming up to where I was in the Court, and telling me 'he perceived there was some misunderstanding about the paper,' conceiving the agreement to be cancelled by Mr. Byrne's death; I told him *I* declined entering into any conversation on the subject. He immediately said, 'Then I must inform you that Mr. Bond's life is not safe; I will go and apprize Mr. Cooke.' Mr. Neilson came to me shortly after, and it was

finally agreed by the State prisoners, that they would abide by the former paper, notwithstanding the execution of Mr. B.—A refusal, we thought, might endanger the survivor, and could in nowise benefit the deceased. On Saturday, we learned from Mr. Dobbs, that Government would not accede to the agreement, but proposed a paper of another sort. This, which was, as well as I can recollect, to disclose names in addition, was rejected with universal indignation. Mr. D. stated that as the last effort, Government would see some of the State prisoners, and perhaps the matter might be arranged between them. Mr. O'Connor, Emmett, M'Nevin, who were confined in the other prisons, were mentioned, and it was asked if we had any objection to their communicating with Government on the subject. This admitted of no objection, for it was perfectly understood, that nothing they did was in any way binding on any individual of us, unless we afterwards agreed to it. On Sunday, these gentlemen came from the Castle to Newgate, with the paper as definitively agreed to on the part of Government; this was discussed, and after many objections, signed by all in the prison who had signed the former paper, save two, whose principal reason for withdrawing, seemed to be the death of Mr. Byrne; and this circumstance is worthy of note, for it shows that it was not personal fears or considerations which operated on the prisoners. Mr. Emmett, my intimate friend, and the other two gentlemen did then, and as often since as I heard them speak on the business, declare that they had positively covenanted with Government for a general

amnesty to all who chose to accept the same terms, and I have no doubt of the fact. Such is what I know of the negotiation.

"On the 11th of September, we saw in the *Courier*, a London paper, a copy of a bill then passing the Irish Parliament, in which the names of the subscribers were included, with one assertion, that they had confessed their guilt, retracted their opinions, and implored pardon. This was the first intimation we had of a measure which so materially affected us: this may serve as an instance to show what was the state of Ireland. Why the Government took such a step, I cannot determine; I have no doubt, however, that they will one day be convinced that justice and policy are inseparable. Mr. Neilson wrote a letter immediately to the *Courier*, denying the assertions of the bill, and this he enclosed to Lord Castlereagh, apprising him of his intention the next day, which was the 12th of September. Mr. Cooke called on him, and informed him that the Lord Lieutenant was determined, 'in case of such a publication, to go on with the executions as before.' Mr. Neilson conceived that it was better to suffer under the calumny, than, by vindicating ourselves, be the occasion of the loss of a single life: in this I did, and do agree with him. Mr. Dobbs, who expressed a regard for me, called on me some time after this, to speak to me on the subject of my own case, and he expressed himself anxious that my imprisonment, which had continued so long, should be terminated as soon as possible, and gave me to understand that Government were not indisposed to the measure; he wished me to state, in a

letter to him, in what manner I was willing to fulfil my engagement of leaving the country; I stated, three months to be at large to settle my affairs, and then to emigrate to such country as should be agreed on between Government and myself, and for the execution of this I would give whatever security they demanded. He let me understand that Government would be satisfied with my word only, that during my stay I would not interfere in politics. I declined entering into any verbal agreement, which might be liable to misunderstanding, but stated that I would give bail to any amount, to surrender myself to Government at twenty-four hours' notice, during the three months of my stay, and this he desired me to state in a letter to him. I am not sure whether all this took place in one or in more conversations. This letter, which he was to lay before Government, I wrote; and as this was an opportunity of expressing myself, (so as by no possibility to affect others,) with respect to the bill above mentioned, I did in this letter deny its assertions; the passage in which I alluded to it was, as well as I recollect, as follows: I said, 'that it was necessary to state, as well in justice to Government as to myself, I had never retracted any political opinion, or confessed any political guilt, for, politically, I had always acted according to the best of my judgment, and agreeably to the dictates of my conscience; that in signing the 'Paper,' I had only had in view saving the blood of others, for I had then been nearly two years in prison, and had often demanded a trial, which was refused me; I say, *as well as I recollect*, for, on the . . . . .

before daylight in the morning, my room in Newgate was entered by a Mr. Carleton, attended by soldiers, and all the papers I had there seized, by order of Government: among them were copies of all my letters to Government, and their answers, and I have never been able to procure their restoration since, nor one of those seized in 1796, by the Marquis of Downshire, though none of them were of any consequence save to myself. The seizure of papers from the State prisoners was general in the different prisons. I do not recollect whether it was before or after this that Mr. Marsden, one of the under Secretaries of State, came to the prisons, and informed the State prisoners from the Lord Lieutenant, that all should be allowed to emigrate conformable to the agreement, except sixteen, whose names he read from a paper, and among which mine was one. 'His Excellency was stated to be sorry that the circumstances of the times did not enable him to include them in the liberation, but he hoped soon to be able to do so.' I have nothing to add, but that on the 18th of March, 1799, Mr. Gregg, the keeper of Newgate, came about four o'clock in the day to my room, and said he was sorry to inform me that Government had determined I was to go on board ship the next morning at six o'clock. At that hour the next day, I was sent on board, with fifteen other State prisoners, and sailed that night, without the least surmise as to the place of our destination; here,* however, we were sent, and here we are likely to remain during the present administration.

* Fort George, in Inverness-shire.

"It may be matter of curiosity to my friends to know, that Mr. Cooke, in a conversation with Mr. Neilson and Bond, after the conclusion of the agreement, said, 'that Government had then sufficient evidence to convict me, but that they were ashamed to bring me to trial after so long an imprisonment.' I have only to add, that during the whole of it, (my imprisonment,) and setting the justice or injustice of it aside, I have always been treated by Government, and by those in whose charge they placed me, with respect and propriety.

"N. B.—All the main points of this are certainly correct; but as the whole is done from memory, some of the lesser circumstances may not be precisely stated in the same order or manner as they occurred.

"T. R."

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER FROM T. RUSSELL TO HIS BROTHER, I. R.

"*Fort George*, 10*th Dec.*, 1800.

"Accompanying this you will likewise receive a statement of what has occurred between Government and myself, at the time of and since my imprisonment. The whole will, I am sure, be interesting to my friends; that part of it which relates to the agreement entered into with Government, will be interesting on other accounts, as a true statement, so far as my knowledge goes, of a transaction much misrepresented. It was written in a hurry, but I have not time to correct it: respecting the principles for which

I am in prison, I have only to say, that my conviction of its rectitude, and my determination, in every vicissitude of life, to persevere in its support every day augments. The numbers who have fallen, and among them many great and good, only, in my judgment, imposes a greater obligation on the survivors to persevere in the great cause. In promoting the good of my country, I am certain I was promoting that of mankind; for the true interest of nations, any more than of individuals, never depends on the ruin of others, though the detestable converse of this is the fashionable cant of the day, even among those who profess patriotism. Even those infatuated people who vainly struggle against the progress of liberty, and who, if they persist, will be crushed in the unstable fabrics of crooked policy, would find their advantage in co-operating in the general good of mankind. Whatever attempts are made (and every effort, I fear, will be made) to extinguish liberty, or to retard her progress, I have no doubt of her ultimate and speedy success. One of the great errors of the times seems to me to be the supposing, that the present contest will or can terminate like former ones—a contest which embraces every quarter of the globe, which embraces the fate of the human race, is not a contest for relative power or riches, whatever momentary hues it may assume, but is a contest between the two principles of despotism and liberty, and can only terminate in the extinction of one or the other, and reason and religion leave me no doubt which will triumph; and believe me, that so far as I am capable of judging, the sacred volume, in

which I have always found support and consolation, evidently points out the impending vengeance of Almighty God on those individuals and those nations who obstinately persist in supporting injustice and tyranny, by fraud, cruelty, and superstition: neither can I so far conform to the notion that usurpation is defensible, because the usurper possesses great talents, or uses his power with clemency; for the most corrupt motives may impel him to such conduct, and the principle is utterly destructive of law and liberty. Every Government, however abominable, may declare they act for the good of the people, who are not wise enough to act for themselves; and God alone can judge the heart: he made men equal; every departure from his laws is folly and confusion; and the records of history show, that the departing from this law has been the cause of the calamities of mankind. So much for my opinions.

"I have nothing to tell of myself or situation. I have only to say, that my health is perfectly good, and the prison (abstracted from the separation from our friends) better than I have been in. We are well lodged, dieted, have a good place of exercise, and are treated with respect: we are very fortunate in our governor, Colonel Stuart; he is a gentleman, who, if somewhat older, might put you in mind of our father; he unites politeness and humanity with a strict discharge of his duty. I must say, that I have always been treated with respect and attention, on the part of Government, since my first imprisonment: this is but justice. My fellow-prisoners are all well. I have

great pleasure in the society of my friend Emmet's delightful family.

"I have not the honour of Mr. Fox's acquaintance —from the regard which, I saw by the public papers, he manifested for Lord E. Fitzgerald, and that which I know Lord Edward had for him, I enclose you a lock of his hair, which I beg you will present, or have presented to him, (if you do not know him,) with my respects. I judged it might be acceptable, if he was not already possessed of some. I was confined in Newgate when he was brought in, and I was the only friend who saw him from that time, except his brother, a few hours before his death;—(irreparable loss to his friends and his country.) I had not the good fortune of *personally* knowing him until after my own imprisonment. So much information, modesty, disinterestedness, and virtue, I never saw combined. To those who know him, it is useless to speak of his character. I was with him most of the first night of his imprisonment, till I was separated from him by order of Government. He was the same that night as ever I had seen him, although he had lost much blood. I saw him but once after, and he was the same: he was given in charge to a captain of foot, so that there was no way of seeing him; but I heard of him every hour of the day. I need only add, his death was like his life. From what I have often heard him say of Mr. Fox, I am sure there was no person whom he would more wish to have a memorial of him; and that circumstance, were there no other, could not fail of giving

me a high idea of that gentleman's character. It may, perhaps, be interesting to state, that the death of Lord Edward did not seem to proceed from his wounds, but from an inflammation and water on his lungs.*

(Signed) "THOS. RUSSELL."

* The two preceding letters were transmitted through the regular official channels.

CHAPTER X.

NOTES FROM THE DIARY OF JOHN SWEETMAN RESPECTING THE COMPACT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE STATE PRISONERS.

"On the 12th of March, 1798, I was arrested at Francis-street by Captain Atkinson, with a guard of thirty soldiers, and brought to the Castle: at night removed to the Custom-house under escort."

"13th. Committed to Kilmainham, under warrant of the Privy Council."

"17th. Confined to our rooms, but permitted to dine and breakfast together."

"28th May. Served with notice of trial."

"24th July. Mr. Dobbs, Sheriff Archer, and Crawford, waited on the prisoners at Kilmainham with a paper which had been signed by the other prisoners at Newgate and Bridewell, except the O'Connors, professing to make discoveries of the progress and state of the rebellion on the conditions of saving the lives of Bond and Byrne, and of being freed from prosecution, the subscribers to emigrate, which was signed."

"25th. Byrne was executed notwithstanding, and

on the next evening Dobbs called on us to state, that the paper signed the day before was now a nullity, as Byrne was executed, and desired to know would we still abide by the paper if Bond's life was spared, to which we assented."

"26th. Bond respited until Monday."

"27th. Mr. Cooke called upon some of the prisoners who had signed, viz. Emmet, Macneven, Jackson, John Sweetman, Thomas Reynolds, and Ivers."

"28th. Mr. Dobbs received a letter from Mr. Cooke, stating that, in consequence of his interview with the prisoners, he was persuaded it was not their intention to give the full and candid information as required by the paper; and that Mr. Bond's execution could not be postponed, unless the gentlemen would give Government unequivocal proof of the sincerity of their intentions. Whereupon it was agreed that three persons should wait on Lord Castlereagh to remove the difficulties and explain, when Thomas A. Emmet and W. J. Macneven were despatched from Kilmainham and O'Connor from Bridewell."

"29th. The above-named had an interview at the Castle with Lord Castlereagh, the Lord Chancellor, and Mr. Cooke; which was satisfactory. They brought home an order for the admission of our friends."

"30th. We were admitted to the jail at large, our solitary confinement having lasted twenty weeks."

"Aug. 27th. Three of the persons examined before the secret committees finding that their evidence had been misrepresented in the prints, published an advertisement justifying themselves. It creates an

astonishing noise; the Government resent it; and Major Sirr is sent to put us once more in solitary confinement. We contrive, however, to be two together, and Emmet and I are chums."

"Sept. 6th. Oliver Bond died; said to be at four in the morning. Inquest sat at three, p.m.; verdict, 'Nothing on the body seemed to indicate that he died of other than a natural death, probably of apoplexy.'"

"Macneven, Emmet, and O'Connor, summoned before the Lords' secret committee; and signed a paper, containing what they conceived to be the substance of their examination before the two committees, Lords and Commons."

"Nov. 4th. Mr. Thomas Braughall was liberated, having given bail, himself in £1,000, and two sureties in £500."

"Nov. 18th, Sunday. This evening Theobald Wolfe Tone died at the Prevot, in the barracks, at seven o'clock."

"Oct. 17, 1798. Mr. Cooke was here (Kilmainham) with Messrs. O'Connor, Emmet, and Macneven. He stated, I understood, that he was commanded by the Lord Lieutenant to inform the gentlemen, that during the present existing circumstances no leave could be given for any person to go to any part of Europe, and that they must either go to America, giving bail, or stay here during the war. This message, though not desired to be stated to the prisoners, but as an answer to letters written to the Lord Lieutenant by the three persons before mentioned, is considered as general."

"Oct. 22. At four o'clock, Mr. Marsden announced to such persons as were preparing to go to America, to suspend their intentions for a few days; but, nevertheless, if there were any who were prepared and wished to depart in the interim, they were at liberty to do so."

"It is to be remarked that Mr. Cooke's letter, of Saturday, to O'Connor, Emmet, and Macneven, states that the prisoners are at liberty to charter a ship which will not be delayed for convoy; and that another letter to the prisoners of the three jails, engages, on the part of Government, that such prisoners as choose to go to America, by the vessel now taking in at Larne, shall be conveyed there as soon as they signify their intention."

"*Dublin Castle, Oct. 20th*, 1798.

"SIR,

"I request you will inform such prisoners in your custody as have signed the agreement with Government, and can give a security for complying with the terms thereof, that a vessel is now at Larne, which will be ready to sail in a few days for America; and that those who can settle their affairs, so as to take a passage in her, shall be sent from hence to where she lies.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"ALEXANDER MARSDEN.

(*A Copy.*) P. S. O.

"*To the Keeper of the Jail of Newgate.*"

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM JOHN SWEETMAN, ADDRESSED TO MR. COOKE; NO DATE.

* * * "When I consider the sacrifices I have made to fulfil my engagements with Government; that I have sold my property, and the most of it at two-thirds of the value; that I have torn up every thing in this country; disposed of my children with the views of an expatriated father; that I have transacted my relations with the public under the various circumstances of imprisonment, and have ceased to trouble Government with any application, either to alleviate them, or on any other account; that my health is so considerably impaired, and the season to change climate so rapidly passing over, I feel myself compelled to address you a third time, and request to be permitted to proceed to a southern country in Europe, not at war with the King. And I do so with the more confidence, because the measures before stated were undertaken for the express purpose of carrying into effect an agreement which I had signed, and which I had repeated assurances would in all its conditions be liberally interpreted." * * *

LETTER OF JOHN SWEETMAN. NO ADDRESS, PROBABLY TO MR. MARSDEN.

"Sir,

"At my arrest on the 12th of March, by Mr. Atkinson and the guards, a large quantity of my papers were seized, and brought to the Castle. As I apprehend they are no longer useful to the Government, I request you will obtain order for them to be restored to me. It is not without some reluctance

I apply to you, to whom I am an utter stranger, nor until I had made several attempts through the medium of another person in the department, Mr. Cooke, all of which have not only been unsuccessful, but have been attended with circumstances of marked indifference. How far my situation, or the want of innate generosity, have betrayed that gentleman into a conduct so harsh and uncivil, I am at a loss to determine.

"If this inattention was meant to hurt my feelings, I will only say he has not done it at any easy expense, for the price is no less than forfeiture of all title to common politeness,—from your character I expect other treatment.

"As to the arrangement of Government respecting the State prisoners, which you communicated to us yesterday, I cannot omit this opportunity to declare that I consider it a direct breach of the agreement entered into with the Lord Lieutenant, which I was repeatedly assured would be liberally interpreted.

(Signed) "J. S."

EXTRACTS FROM JOHN SWEETMAN'S DIARY.

"Monday, March 18, 1799. Received notice from the Castle at five o'clock in the evening, by young Godfrey, that the following prisoners, who had been confined in Kilmainham, were to be put on board ship the next morning at six o'clock, viz., Thomas Emmet, John Sweetman, John Chambers, Joseph Cuthbert, John Cormick, George Cumming.

"Upon asking Godfrey where or how we were to be embarked, or the places we were to be sent to, he

informed us he could not tell, or form any opinion on the subject. On remonstrating with him on the cruelty of sending us off in so precipitate a manner, and that we wished to apply to the Lord Lieutenant, he said all he could do was to bear any letters we might wish to send.

"Emmet and I wrote to the Lord Lieutenant, others to Lord Castlereagh, to which we received no answers. In consequence of the writ of *ne exeat regno* issued against me by the Lord Chancellor, the High Sheriff called at the jail, and bid the jailer not give me up to Government without the money, £1000, was paid. His first visit was early in the day. He called in the evening, and repeated it; he called again, and added that a lock should be put on my room door; and that if the Governor persisted, they should be obliged to break open the doors, and take me by force and arms. Thus it remained until half-past ten, when I was informed by the jailer that I was to go, and that he was authorised to give me up by the High Sheriff. I mentioned to Mr. Godfrey that a *ne exeat regno* was issued against me: he answered, 'Let Government and the judicial power settle it between them.' At half-past six the next morning, we were hurried off under a guard of the Buckinghamshire of 120 men, among whom were several horse, with Mr. Godfrey on horseback: about half an hour before this, Hudson was informed, for the first time, that he must accompany us; he made the seventh, and was in the second coach with Emmet, Chambers, and me. About nine we arrived at the Pigeon-house, where we found the two O'Connors,

Sweeny, Russell, and Dowdall. Breakfast was prepared at the Pigeon-house; and about eleven we were put on board boats: seventy men and two officers of the Angusshire being sent off to the ship before us. Swan, Atkinson, Godfrey, and Sirr attended us to the beach-side. A little after we reached the vessel, the *Ashton Smith*, of Caernarvon, commanded by Morris Roberts, the *Townsend*, revenue cutter, being astern of us as convoy. We remained here till the night tide, when we sailed. Several of our friends came on board in the course of the day."

CHAPTER XI.

Neilson's sufferings during his first confinement of eighteen months' duration,—the loss of all his property and most intimate friends,—one after the other of his associates daily imprisoned or proscribed, the circle of his acquaintance day after day narrowed by executions or other calamities,—the turmoil of the scenes on which he was thrown after his liberation,—his capture, the bodily injuries he then received,—his miserable condition from that period till he was brought before the Court loaded with irons, a period of nearly a month, during which the chains he bore, by the acknowledgment of the jailer, were more than were ordinarily put on two men,—these are circumstances which ought to be remembered, when we form a judgment of Neilson's character from his conduct during the period of these sufferings.

The old ruinous remedy for alleviating such troubles was unfortunately had recourse to at this time by Neilson; and it is needless to say, the remedy only aggravated the evil. The result of many inquiries among the intimate friends of Neilson, establishes pretty clearly, that previous to his first

confinement, his habits were not those which were then deemed intemperate. With respect to those pernicious customs, which are called convivial, in persons of a certain rank in society, and by another name when mention is made of them with regard to persons in an humbler walk of life, Neilson did not form an exception to the fashion of the times. He went much into society, for the purpose of propagating those opinions of which his paper was the organ, and of extending the Union among all classes. In those times, all the *business* of the country societies was conducted in *public houses*; and men entered into solemn engagements, involving consequences of awful moment to their country and to themselves, in the midst of scenes ill calculated for cool deliberation. This, it may be said, was only amongst the lower orders of the United Irishmen, like those belonging to the "Muddlers' Club," of Belfast. But the upper orders, though they might not congregate in "Shebeen" houses, and way-side inns, also had their houses of entertainment in the metropolis, their taverns on a larger scale; their "Eagle," in Exchequer-street; their "Struggler's tavern," in Cook-street; and their business was done "after the cloth was removed," and the port wine was laid on the table. It was at such times and at such convivial meetings the introduction of candidates for admission was discussed, their qualifications were talked over, and the test eventually administered and taken in a room adjoining that in which the revels of a convivial party and the machinations of conspirators went on simultane-

ously. It is no wonder if "the rebellious liquors," ascending to the brain, conspired to set "the vital commoners and inland petty spirits" in a flame.

When Bond and Butler were imprisoned in Newgate in 1794, they constantly entertained their political friends; and during the six months they spent there, we are informed by William Paulet Carey, the author of the "Vindiciæ Hiberniæ," that the bills sent into the Dublin Society of the "United Irishmen" for wine supplied for these entertainments amounted to £500.* Whatever may have been the imprudence of Neilson while confined in Newgate, at Fort George it was only by his abstemiousness that he secured the enjoyment of having his boy with him.

By a letter of his, dated November 4, 1801, it will be seen that at Fort George he deprived himself of the customary allowance of wine, in order to procure sufficient means to bear the expenses of his son's maintenance in this prison.

The execution of Byrne (mentioned in Neilson's narrative) was a dreadful blow to the latter. The efforts and sacrifices he had made, with the view of saving his life and Bond's, it seemed had then been made in vain; and all the odium and misrepresentation of his motives, was to be encountered, which he well knew would follow the mere proposal of giving up the secrets of his Society to Government. These circumstances are to be taken into account, as well as the severe trial of his feelings at seeing a brave

* W. P. Carey's Appeal to the People of Ireland, 1794.

young man, a companion in misfortune, an associate in the cause, whom he esteemed most highly, led forth from his presence, from the very cell he was confined in, to the scaffold. William Michael Byrne, of Park-hill, was a descendant of an ancient family in Wicklow, that county which, in former times, was called "The O'Byrnes' Country." A remnant of the property of his ancestors had escaped the rapacity of the "Conquistadores" in Ireland, in the reign of James I., when the broad lands of the Byrnes were confiscated for the benefit of their persecutor, "an unprincipled adventurer," of the name of Parsons.* Byrne's life was one of those which was sworn away by Mr. Thomas Reynolds, in the summer of 1798. The 28th of July was the day appointed for his execution; and the negotiations between the State prisoners and the Government having been then entered into, there was very little doubt entertained by himself or his fellow-prisoners but that his life would be spared. On the morning of the 28th, he was sitting at breakfast in Bond and Neilson's cell, (the wives of the latter being then present,) when the jailer appeared, and beckoned to Byrne to come to the door and speak with him. Byrne arose, a few words were whispered into his ear: he returned to the cell, and apologized to the ladies for being obliged to leave them. Bond asked him if he would not return; and his reply was, *We will meet again.* He went forth without the slightest sign of perturbation or concern, and was led back for a few mi-

* Dr. Taylor's Civil Wars in Ireland, vol. i., p. 243.

nutes to his cell, and then conducted to the scaffold. On passing the cell of Bond and Neilson, which he had just left, he stooped, that he might not be observed through the grated aperture in the upper part of the door, in order that Mrs. Neilson and Mrs. Bond might be spared the shock of seeing him led to execution.

These particulars are given on the authority of the daughter of Neilson, who was then in Dublin with her mother, and has a perfect remembrance of these circumstances being the subject of her mother's and Mrs. Bond's conversation at the time.

The following reference to Byrne's fate is taken from Dr. Macneven's "Account of the Treaty between the United Irishmen and the Anglo-Irish Government."

"Mr. Byrne was of one of the first families of the country; and among his relatives had many friends who, without his knowledge, exerted their interest to preserve his life. They were told that, if he would express regret at being an United Irishman, and declare that he was seduced by Lord Edward Fitzgerald, he should be forgiven. When this proposal was made known to him, he spurned at it with abhorrence. He declared that he had no regret, but that of not leaving his country free; that he was never seduced to be an United Irishman; and least of all, by that hallowed character whose memory they wished to traduce. 'Perhaps,' said he, 'they intend to rob his children of his inheritance; but my existence shall never be disgraced by giving sanction to so base a design.' This young man, having a strong sense of

religion, received its rites with a cheerful hope and an assured conscience, expressing the greatest consolation at quitting life in his perfect senses, with leisure for previous preparation, and in such a cause. His very adversaries were forced to bear homage to that cause which produced such martyrs."*

The position in which Neilson stood with regard to the several prisoners executed in July, 1798, was one that, for its trials, could hardly have been rendered more dreadful. All of the prisoners, with the exception of the Sheares, were his associates and acquaintances. Bond, Byrne, and M'Cann were his intimate friends. With the first he had been long and closely connected, both in business and in political affairs. They shared the same cell when Bond was condemned to death; they shared the same bed; they sat at the same table: and after Byrne's execution, when no hope was entertained of Bond's being respited, the most attached friend he had on earth had the pain of seeing him, not casually or for a few moments at a parting interview, but constantly and without intermission. This was a situation, the overpowering painfulness of which was enough to drive a man mad. The coffin of his friend was in his sight when he left his cell. Nay, he even saw the preparations making for his execution the night before the appointed day. Early the following morning, a request was made by Bond to Neilson; the compliance with which it is possible to conceive, but not to express the feelings it must have occasioned.

Neilson was requested by Bond to proceed to the

* Vide Pieces of Irish History, p. 149.

press-room, and to ascertain, by his own examination, the strength of the rope which was prepared for carrying his sentence into effect. This extraordinary commission was occasioned by some apprehension of Bond's, that, being a man of large and robust frame, the breaking of the rope might be the occasion of protracted suffering. When he returned to the cell, Bond asked him "if every thing was right," and Neilson could only answer, "Yes, Bond."

It was only at three o'clock in the afternoon that a shout, raised by the people in front of the jail, who had assembled to witness the execution, prepared the prisoners for the announcement, on the part of the sheriffs, that Mr. Bond was respited during pleasure.

In the preceding narrative of Neilson, the sudden death of Bond is briefly alluded to. Murphy's account of the circumstances connected with this event, and published in the former series of this work,* leaves the cause and manner of his death involved in mystery.

The daughter of Neilson, who was staying at the house of Bond at the period of his death in Newgate, gives the following account of that mysterious event:—

"Bond had been removed, after his trial and conviction, to one of the condemned cells, and Neilson

* Lives and Times of the United Irishmen, First Series, vol. i. p. 271.

had got leave to remain with him. Mrs. Bond, through the influence of Armstrong, was allowed to put a bed, with curtains, in the cell. On the 6th of September, Bond had been playing a good deal at ball. That evening Gregg, the jailer, by the desire of Bond and Neilson, brought in some supper and a jug of punch. Samuel Neilson went to bed, leaving Bond and Gregg together. They were not then quarrelling: there was no one present but themselves. The following morning, at break of day, Neilson heard some cries of the female prisoners in the opposite ward: he ran out, and found Bond's body lying in the doorway, half his body in, half out, dressed as he had been when he last saw him.

"Mrs. Bond slept that night at her own house, and Mrs. Neilson was then stopping with her. In the morning Mr. Beers came to Mrs. Neilson's room, and told her all; she ran to Mrs. Bond, accompanied by Beers, and communicated the dreadful tidings to her."

FROM THE LATE JAS. DAVOCK, AN INTIMATE FRIEND AND NEIGHBOUR OF BOND.

"I received the following account of this matter:— Bond, from the time of his trial, slept in the same bed with Neilson. The evening before his death, Davock saw him in the yard of the prison; he seemed then to be in perfect health: the next morning he was found dead, in the passage outside his cell. It was the general opinion that he had been strangled. Bond had a free pardon signed at the Castle at that time, and was to have been sent out of the country with the other State prisoners. It was necessary for

his wife to obtain this pardon, to enable her to collect in the debts; for he left about £30,000 behind him; and his friends were afraid of impeding her application, and thought it better to allow the common report of his death arising from apoplexy to pass unnoticed.

"The surgeon-general examined the body, and surgeon Geoghan was also present, but was kept too far away from the body to see distinctly what the appearances were. Davock says, the report in the prison was, that he had been killed by the under-jailer, Simpson. Davock was informed by Murphy, there was such an uproar in the prison all that night, that Murphy and others barricadoed their doors on the inside, afraid of violence. The woman who first swore, at the inquest, that she had seen him die in the yard, afterwards, in a quarrel, accused Simpson of the murder; on which he kicked her in the back, of which she died. In a New York paper, called the *Irish Citizen*, of the 25th Jan. 1843, published by B. P. Binns, the brother of the prisoner who was tried at Maidstone with Arthur O'Connor, an article, professing to be written by one who had a good deal of knowledge of the events occurring at that period, states, that Bond 'was killed by a blow of a copper kettle on the back of the head, inflicted by one of the turnkeys, in a dark passage leading to his cell.' Nothing certain, however, is known of this mysterious business."

The first reason alleged by Government for detaining the State prisoners after their satisfactory fulfilment of the engagement they had entered into,

was the objections thrown in the way of their emigration to the United States by the American minister, Mr. Rufus King. Their republican principles, strange to say, appeared to the accredited agent of the American republic an objection to their becoming citizens of the latter.

Another pretext was founded on a rumour of a new conspiracy having been entered into, a short time before their removal to Fort George, by some of the prisoners. These rumours were industriously circulated; and the breach of faith which they had experienced, was certainly not calculated to prevent the danger of such a denouement.

The infamous spy system was carried even into the jails; and the tempters there found a favourable field on some occasions to promote their nefarious schemes.

James Hope, the confidential friend of Neilson, subsequently to the liberation of the latter, asked him the cause of the prisoners being removed from the Irish prisons to Fort George. Neilson said the only cause that he was aware of, with respect to the conduct of the prisoners, was the following: Some of them had given offence by publishing letters in the papers, disclaiming acts ascribed to them; and others, in conversation, had expressed regret that they had signed the agreement, and discussed amongst themselves the subject of the probable success of an insurrection in the existing state of the country. One of the prisoners, Ivers, had taken notes of the conversation (for what purpose Neilson did not state); and soon afterwards a rigorous search was instituted

in the several prisons, the papers of all the prisoners were seized, and, amongst the rest, the notes of the conversation drawn up by Ivers. This took place in the autumn of 1798.

In the diary of John Sweetman, wherein references are made to all matters of importance to himself and his fellow-prisoners, from the 12th of March, 1798, the date of his arrest, to the 13th of December, names of persons, and mention of matters connected with them, are set down in a very brief form, as memoranda, to recall the recollection of details. The date 27th of July, 1798, is prefixed to the following record of two names, "Thomas Reynolds and Ivers." With regard to the publication of the letter signed "A. O'Connor, T. A. Emmet, and W. I. Macneven," in the Dublin papers, in the month of August following, the proceedings in Parliament afford sufficient proof of the disposition to deprive the prisoners of the benefit of the compact entered into with them, had any subsequent act of theirs afforded even the shadow of a pretext for dealing with them with the utmost rigour of the law. On the 27th of August the Hon. Francis Hutchinson brought before the House of Commons the subject of the advertisement signed by three of the State prisoners, disclaiming the terms in which the Government stated mercy had been extended to these traitors; and concluded a speech of extraordinary virulence, by moving that the printers of *Saunders' News Letter* and *The Hibernian Journal* be brought before the House. Mr. Barrington (Sir Jonah) condemned the insolence of the publication in the strongest language. Mr. Plunket

censured the advertisement in milder terms. Mr. John Blaquier spoke to the same effect; Mr. Egan followed on the same side. Mr. Vandeleur said that the three persons who had signed it should be immediately brought to trial for their treasons; they had forfeited all claims to mercy. Mr. M'Naghten suggested that they should be handed over to the courts-martial. Mr. Osborne opposed any such proceeding.

The printer of the *Hibernian Journal* next day was called up, and said that "the advertisement had been brought to Mrs. M'Donnell by two gentlemen, and paid for with three half-crowns by Mr. Cornelius M'Loughlin, merchant, of Usher's Island, and Mr. Lewis Lyons, of Arran Quay." Major Sirr was called, and said that he had gone to Kilmainham; that O'Connor did not acknowledge the publication, but Emmet and Macneven did. They were then confined separately.

August 29th. Cornelius M'Loughlin and Lewis Lyons were called to the bar. Mr. M'Loughlin said that the Sunday before he walked with Lyons into the country, and being near Kilmainham they called to see Mr. R. Dillon, who was confined there, having commercial transactions to speak of with him. Coming from the yard where Dillon was met, the three gentlemen alluded to, invited him into their room, and producing the advertisement, it was read by one of them; he did not know which of them requested, as he was going into town, to leave it at the offices of the two papers, and also at that of the *Evening Post*. He never had any intercourse with any of the

three persons whose names are signed to it, except so far as an acquaintance with their persons, and the common civility of a passing salute; but solemnly declared he had no such object as the House imputed to his conduct. Lyons gave similar information. Mr. M'Naghten moved that both gentlemen should be committed to Newgate. The Hon. Mr. Annesley seconded the motion. Sir John Blaquier supported the motion; Mr. Barrington also.

Lord Castlereagh opposed the motion in a temperate speech, recommending moderation, and endeavouring to impress the House with his view of the matter, namely, that it was the comments of the newspapers, and not the conduct of the Government, that had been called in question by the prisoners. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and Sir Laurence Parsons spoke to the same effect. Mr. Egan retracted his former opinion. On a division, twenty-seven were against the motion, and sixteen for it.*

When the determination of the Government to remove the state prisoners from the several jails in Dublin and Belfast to another part of the kingdom was announced to them, on the 18th of March, 1799, Neilson was then labouring under fever, confined to his bed, and his recovery hardly expected by his companions in misfortune. In this state Neilson, notwithstanding his urgent solicitation to be allowed a little time to prepare for his departure, and in the hope of being better able, in a few weeks, to encounter the fatigue and hazard of removal, was sent on

* Irish Parliamentary Debates.

board ship. His condition is described by Dr. Dickson, in his Narrative: "Our destination (to me, at least,) was perfectly unknown, till after our arrival in Scotland. Sometimes, indeed, the state of the unhappy Neilson, one of our number, silenced every tongue, and wounded every heart. A severe fever, under which he had long laboured in Dublin, and notwithstanding the continuance of which he had been barbarously embarked with the other prisoners, had rendered him not only weak, but completely delirious. This weakness and delirium still continued, and were not entirely removed till long after our arrival at Fort George."*

* Dr. William Steel Dickson's Narrative of his Confinement and Exile, p. 109.

CHAPTER XII.

I AVAIL myself of the account of the removal of the state prisoners to Fort George, which I find in the diary of John Sweetman, and the particular details into which it enters with respect to Neilson's unfortunate condition on board the transport, as furnishing the most authentic information on these subjects:—

"We sailed (on the 19th March) with the wind pretty fair, but in the night it came to blow hard, and the vessel heaved terribly. Most of us were sick, and so continued the whole of Wednesday. The weather was rough and cold; our course for Belfast; there to take in more prisoners. From thence to sail for Greenock. After landing, to be conveyed to Dumbarton. This is the first information of any consistency which we received as to the place of our destination. Continued our course northward, with middling wind. Thursday morning near the Moran mountains, with Carlingford Bay in view: the *Townsend's* boat comes alongside, with orders to stand in, and moor a small distance astern of her. The day being fine, and wishing to take the air on deck after the sea sickness, we are

told by the sentries that two only are permitted to walk the main deck at a time, for a foot we were never suffered to put on the quarter deck. In consequence of this order we sent a note to Captain Ewing, commanding officer, requesting he would give orders that four of us should be permitted up at a time, which he consents to. Spent the day one way and the other, and prepared for turning in about ten, when Samuel Neilson broke out into a fit of delirium. He darted from his bed, and ran round the hold, in search of robbers who had plundered his house: his manner, looks, and conversation, evince delirium. It is difficult to restrain him from going upon deck. It is thought advisable to inform the commanding officer of his situation: Macneven goes up to bring him down to see his situation: a young officer comes to the hatchway, but will not come down, alleging that he can do no good. He has the ladder taken away. I propose a watch, and take the first two hours: Sweeny gets up to assist me to keep him in bed. He rises several times, and acquires strength with the increase of his disorder.

"He continues speaking, raving, and starting, in the most frightful manner during our watch; the prisoners cannot sleep, and the hold is in a state of the greatest confusion.

"Thomas Russell is called, being the next on the watch. He reported next morning, Saturday, as did those who succeeded him, that Neilson continued as first stated, raving, starting, and using strong efforts to get up. About half-past nine we were all alarmed

by a fit which seized him, being the second since his coming on board. This fit was not so violent as the former. Feeling the dreadful effects of Neilson's situation, we agreed that a representation should be made of his case to Government, declaring that his life was in danger; and Macneven, as a medical man, was instructed to write a letter to Lord ——— on the subject, which Captain Ewing having read, consented to send it, but said he had no hopes of its being effectual. He remarked, that a few lines, which threw the responsibility on Government, after warning them of the consequences, might be better omitted; but no alteration was made. The letter desired that he might be landed at Belfast.

"March 24. The wind coming about, the convoy makes a signal of sailing. At two o'clock we weighed, and turned out of the bay of Carlingford. A slight breeze from the south-west during the night; but early in the morning a brisk gale got up, which enabled us to reach the Lough of Belfast about eight o'clock in the morning. Easter Sunday.—At nine the convoy came to an anchor in White House Road, and in half an hour we were moored there. Immediately after, a very heavy gale came on with a breaking sea, which continued the whole day, with rain. Two of the soldiers stayed up all night with Neilson. He passed the night pretty well; but in the morning he had a most violent fit, which continued from eight until ten. It is not possible to describe his situation or ours. We were often of opinion he would breathe his last before night. Macneven wrote to the com-

manding officer of Belfast about Neilson's case, and desiring that he would have him landed.

"Monday morning, 25th March. The convoy's boat came along and took in the two lieutenants and the steward, to whom Captain Ewing gave our letters to put in the Post-office, having first read them. At half-past two a boat from the tender came alongside, with Doctor Dickson, Robert Simms, William Tennent, and Robert Hunter; the Doctor from on board the Tender, and the other three from the Prevot prison, except Tennent, who had been suffered to remain at his own house, on account of a broken leg, which happened to him on board the Tender, in October last. We all dined about four o'clock. Neilson became more tranquil and contented. This day was extremely fine, and the Lough perfectly smooth.

"Tuesday morning, at four o'clock, weighed anchor for Greenock, the wind pretty fair. A heavy gale came on between six and seven, during which the ship required the entire force of the crew to manage her. One of the soldiers happened to be an old sailor on the Scotch coast, and was highly serviceable. He stood at the helm, and made the Rock of Ailsa about seven. The gale increased to a rank storm. We went between ten and eleven knots an hour; the gunwale and three streaks of deck under water. The sea broke clear over us, and poured into the hold; several of the berths were drenched with water. Mine was completely flooded by the bilge water, which came up between the timbers, and through the ceiling. All the trunks were knocked

about, and most of the crockery broken. The hold exhibited a most confused scene. It was impossible to keep one's feet, or find a dry spot, this storm continuing till near eleven, when we got into the Firth of Clyde. We were now in a heavy gale of wind, and had as fine a sail as could be, till we got within sight of the lighthouse going up to Greenock, the wind slackened and became contrary, and after a few tacks we anchored astern of the convoy, within a mile and a half of the lighthouse.

"Neilson continues the same way, and our party again pluck up their spirits. The next day, Wednesday, the 27th, weighed and began to tack, the wind being adverse. We continued at this work the whole day, and made by computation about one mile and a half; we again anchored within the light. The days were very fine, and the views on each side were romantic and beautiful. Neilson is something better.

"Thursday, March 28th. Weighed and commenced tacking; the wind being more favourable, we made a better hand of it. At half-past three, in making the larboard tack, the ship missed stays, she continued driving ashore under a heavy gale of wind, and with the very utmost difficulty answered helm in time to prevent her going on shore. We were at one time within 150 feet of the shore, and every hand on board was certain she must go ashore. The mate said nothing could save her. Though present at the time, I really viewed it without any emotion. The commanding officer ordered us all under hatches, just as she was clawing off. We continued tacking till late in the

evening, it blowing a storm, and then anchored, as we perceived in the morning, about a mile and a half from Greenock. This was indeed a dreadful night, perhaps more so than any person on board had experienced.

"About half-past six o'clock, Captain Ewing sent for me, and informed me that he had received a letter from the officer on shore, that four coaches were arrived from Edinburgh to convey us to Fort George under escort of a troop of horse, which were expected to arrive at Greenock to-night; that three messengers had come down from London to attend us; one of them, Mr. Scott, had requested that we should arrange the sets of persons which should occupy each carriage; that each person would be allowed to carry a portmanteau.

"Saturday, March 30th. A boat came alongside the ship, to order the ship down to Greenock, which being done, we were landed in boats with our baggage.

"We were received on shore by the messengers, Scott, Sylvester, and ———, a large party of the North York Militia being drawn up. We were then put into carriages, five in each. I was in No. 2, with Joseph Cormick, Cuthbert, Hudson, and Chambers.

"We then were conveyed to Greenock, where we dined, the magistrates and guards attending. It being too late to proceed on, slept in the large room we dined in, the Town-hall, at the White Hart, M'Kinacky's; the guards attending all night, with two officers, Major Hay, aid-de-camp to Abercrombie, one of them. The officers behaved with

much politeness, as did the messengers. We gave up all our money to Scott, by order; mine was in my purse, seventeen guineas. The people of Greenock crowded in great numbers to see us. It was hard to form any opinion of the sentiments of the people; we were perfectly convinced that all the upper orders in the town are highly aristocratical. A Mr. M'Loughlin, a merchant of the town, of the house of Daniel and John M'Loughlin, made himself known to me, mentioned his connexion with Cornelius M'Loughlin, and the Dodds. He very kindly squeezed my hand, but took an opportunity of doing it when there was no one present, otherwise, he assured me, it would be injurious to him; and, further, that he ran considerable risk in conversing with me. M'Loughlin is an officer in the town volunteers, or he could not get into the room where we were.

"Sunday. Got up at half-past five, dressed, and in the coaches about half-past six. Proceeded to Bishopton inn, ten miles from Greenock and twelve from Glasgow. The road was for the most part along the Clyde. Passed near Paisley, from thence to Glasgow, but did not go through the city, only that part of the suburbs which lay on the right bank of the Clyde. We were met here by a great number of people who, by their looks, we conceived to be friends. They came over the bridge and along the river in great numbers. The carriages drove furiously through the part of the town we passed through. Passed through Rutherglen, three miles from Glas-

gow, where we observed the people equally favourable. Next to Hamilton, where we arrived at half-past three."

[The remainder of the narrative is descriptive of the country through which they passed on their way to Fort George, where they arrived on the 14th of April, 1799.]

CHAPTER XIII.

The preceding details bring down the history of Neilson to the date of his removal from Dublin, and his arrival, with the other State prisoners, at Fort George, in Scotland. I now lay before my readers the letters of Neilson to his family, during the term of his imprisonment, hitherto unpublished, and ten others of an earlier date, addressed to Tone, which have appeared in the Memoirs of the latter. These letters place the character of Neilson in a very different light to that in which it has been, not unfrequently, viewed by writers who have treated of the history of the struggle he was engaged in.

I have thought it better to insert the following extracts from his letters, in the successive order of their dates, than to introduce them apart, and thus take from their interest by any intervening matter. The seven letters addressed to Tone were written in the years 1792 and 1793; the others between 1798 and 1803.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS OF S. NEILSON.

TO THEOBALD WOLFE TONE.

"*Belfast, 21st Nov.*, 1792.

"DEAR TONE,

"It gives us much pleasure to find you are going on so well; you really manage things wonderfully, considering that you are Papists, and, of course, wicked and ignorant scoundrels.

"As to the spirit and determination of our friends in Dublin, we expected much, and we are not disappointed. In general, throughout Ireland, you have spoken well too; but I have to remark to you, from myself, that, if we are to judge by their newspapers, the people of Cork, Galway, Limerick, and Waterford, are by no means friendly to the doctrine of the people's sovereignty. I do not blame them for not joining us in hallooing up the French, for there are many things in their conduct, that, under all circumstances of the case, cannot be very acceptable to an Irish Catholic. But I blame them, severely blame them, for attacking the *principle*, and I fear they are far behind you, and by no means ripe yet. It is, however, to be understood, that I speak, under correction, on a point I do not so well know as you do.

"You can form no conception of the rapid progress of union here; and I do assure you we are farther forward than even I expected we should have been in a twelvemonth. The universal question throughout the country is, When do we begin? Do we refuse hearth-money or tithes first?

"As to a petition in your favour, it will go from

Belfast, a *literal copy* of that which Mr. Latouche kicked out; and I believe by January we are perfectly safe in calling a meeting of the county Antrim; I am taking some steps to prepare for it. I should imagine the petition from Antrim will be approving your conduct, and praying redress generally. I will write to you about the county Down in a few days. Luke Teeling, one of the county members to your committee, dines here to-morrow with us, in order to receive instructions: aye, to receive instructions; for he says he will represent the county faithfully.

"S. N."

TO THEOBALD WOLFE TONE.

"*Belfast, 3rd Dec.*, 1792.

"Dear Fellow-Slave,

"I do command you to give me, nightly, an abstract of the proceedings of the Convention. I can assure you, it is essentially necessary to all our interests, and insist on it. Why did you not answer mine of Thursday? Tell Russell his documents are necessarily detained till to-morrow. We are extremely anxious to hear every iota of your proceedings, as we only wait for the result of them to frame our plan of action.

"S. N."

TO THEOBALD WOLFE TONE.

"Slave,

"You have not done as I should have expected. You have, for five days of the most interesting crisis, kept us, your constituents, in the dark. We will

never forgive you. We all waited, and searched, and laboured, to hear news from our friends, these two nights—and not a word. The enemies have had abundance. Charges the most heinous are echoed against the Catholics, and we have no means of refuting them; thanks to our faithful representative.

"S. N."

TO THEOBALD WOLFE TONE.

"*February 28th*, 1793.

"My dear Friend,

"I was at Dungannon, and do not dislike the resolutions so much as you seem to do. I wish I saw anything like them, or even half like them, from the other provinces. As to the third resolution, take it with the commentary, and I fancy, on reflection, you will not disapprove of it. But what signifies resolutions? They will never recover to the people their long lost rights. Or what is more,—what signify the united exertions of four or five spirited counties, who aim at rational liberty, without money, without arms, without ammunition? * * *
I say, what signifies such exertions, against such opponents, when not supported by the people? In such a situation they become of the nature of sedition, and when against the implied sense of the nation, should terminate. It is true, a few honest men, by going forward, may sacrifice themselves as victims; but is the state of the people bettered by all this? I cannot see how; and I will add, that when a nation does not express a wish to be free, it ought not to be made so contrary to its will. We have

now in this town, one regiment; in Lisburn, five companies, and two troops of horse; accompanied in the whole by eight brass field pieces, and two howitzers, with their proportion of men. These are strong arguments against the people, and in our present state irresistible. If, however, the rest of the nation was ready, this country would not be deficient in spirit. We complain that you give us no account of the proceedings in Dublin; no opinion on the plans of Government; no information how the Catholics relish Hobart's bill; no intelligence of their views respecting reform; in short, that you leave us completely in the dark, at a time when a storm is obviously collecting round our devoted heads. Remember, I am a plain honest man, and like to talk my mind without reserve to those I can confide in. Two persons of indifferent character have been summoned before the *Star Chamber*, from this town. Pray what does this court tend to, or to what points are their views directed? Why do you not inform us on all these points, when you call for news from this sterile corner, where we make all our proceedings public to the world? I wrote to Keogh last night a similar letter, and stated to him that he would probably look upon it as peevish. I dare say you will do the same. Be it so; peevishness itself is gratified by expression, and I feel myself the better for having given it utterance.

"S. N.

"P.S. You are in a mistake about the French war. It was uncommonly reprobated by a strong resolution."

TO THEOBALD WOLFE TONE.

March 11*th*, 1793.

"DEAR SIR,

"I dare say you will have heard much of disturbances here. I think it my duty, from friendship and fellow-citizenship, to state the facts to you. On Saturday four troops of the 17th Dragoons came here from two neighbouring towns; at six in the evening, about thirty of them burst out from their lodgings, and with drawn sabres, accompanied by about six or eight artillerymen, proceeded to demolish several signs of Dumourier, Mirabeau, Franklin, Washington, &c. From this they proceeded to the houses of several individuals, M'Cabe, &c., and broke windows, shutters, &c., cutting and abusing every person they met with in the street, in a most unmerciful manner. This military mob reigned for about an hour. The empire of the laws began then to be restored. The officers and magistrates were at length found. The volunteers began to assemble, and the depredators soon took to their heels. Some were secured, but afterwards liberated by their officers. The volunteers mounted guard all night. Yesterday the town met, appointed a committee to inquire and report, and the volunteers re-assembled in the evening, filled the houses that were suspected to be attacked, and formed two reserves, in all about four hundred and fifty to five hundred. This turned the scale, the military took the alarm, bowed and begged pardon; and this day the whole regiment of horse were ordered to leave town in fifteen minutes'

warning, by General White, whose conduct has been highly proper. Tranquillity is perfectly restored; we have forgiven the troop, and permitted the offenders to depart with their corps; and we remain standing to our arms, without having offended or given cause of offence to a single military man.

"SAMUEL NEILSON."

TO RICHARD M'CORMICK, ESQ.

August 26th, 1793.

"DEAR SIR,

"Will you excuse an unfortunate persecuted northern incendiary the liberty of asking once more his reputed countryman and friend one simple question? Is Ireland abandoned? I mean by those who have the necessary abilities and confidence to lead the great majority of the Catholics. If so, let us all join in the act. We once united, or appeared to unite, in an effort to rescue our common country. She has not been rescued. Where lies the cause? Who are in fault? Each party is apt to exculpate itself, but I suppose the fault must be laid to our door, especially if the old adage, that what every person says must be true, is to be relied upon. Every man who has a part in governing this country blames us; every man who fattens on church and state blames us; almost every Protestant out of Ulster blames us; every man of landed property throughout all Ireland blames us; and strange to tell, those men who stimulated us to action, those men who pledged themselves to risk all in the common cause, those men who alone have benefited

by our exertions, in one word, the Catholics of Ireland, if we are to suppose that their representatives know anything of their sentiments, are decided in condemning us. For not to speak of their refusal to include us among their friends, when they were concluding their business as a convention, they could not, when assembled the other day in a festive capacity, omit insulting this province. Yes! I will repeat it, the meeting at Daly's insulted the province of Ulster; because, when ransacking * * pseudo patriotism for toasts, they tacitly condemned one fourth of their countrymen, the body who saved them, when deserted or opposed by all those whom they toasted on the 20th inst. Your prudence in overlooking Mr. Tandy, who has been destroyed in your cause; your wisdom in disregarding the sufferings of Messrs. Buster, Bond, and Reynolds, who were imprisoned for you; and your temperance in neglecting this town, which has been abandoned for four months past to martial law on your account, cannot but be highly gratifying to every true Irishman. But your omitting to mention the Dungannon convention, which represented one million and a quarter of your countrymen, and which demanded the restoration of *your rights* in particular, as well as of the rights of Ireland in general, was such an act of ——— as will not in future be believed, and which I confess I never can forget. I speak to you, my dear friend, the language of a warm, but of an honest Irishman, and I know you too well to think you will censure me for it; I may be mistaken, but you know I am not easily operated

on; trifles do not usually affect me. I thought it my duty to communicate with one, who I believe to have similar feelings with myself on such occasions, and I shall be much gratified by a reply as soon as convenient.

"S. N."

CHAPTER XIV.

TO MRS. NEILSON.

"17*th March*, 1798.

"I CONTINUE tolerably well in health, but my limbs still refuse their office, and at times give me much pain. I live sometimes at one place and sometimes at another, never long anywhere, for I have been given to know that my *old lodgings* are in waiting for me. All your friends are well and in good spirits. I remain as usual. My love to all friends, and am

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Newgate, Friday, 6th July*, 1798.

"At length I have got liberty to write you from my cell. I am in good health, in spite of my hard treatment. My trial comes on next Thursday, and though I have no apprehension, I am prepared for the worst, because I know the malice of my enemies is extremely keen.

"My irons are now only on one leg, and my straw bed has become familiar to me, though I sleep little

and eat less. My spirits are the same as ever, but my memory much worse than ever, and you know it was bad at the best.

"Mr. Curran and my other friends persuaded me off my purpose of having no counsel, and I have nominated him and Mr. Ponsonby.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Newgate*, 14*th July*, 1798.

"Among all my other calamities it has not been the least, that I was likely to leave this scene of everlasting sorrow and renewed affliction, without knowing my dear wife, children, and friends did so much as exist. I need not, therefore, tell you what pleasure I felt on receipt of yours, with your accustomed fortitude. I trust it will not fail you in case of the worst, for which we should, on such occasions, be always prepared. I have had a smart illness these few days past, which vexed me the more as it was likely to affect my head, which at this crisis would be dreadful indeed. I am, however, nearly quite well again. My irons have been taken off, and I get walking in the lobby much earlier and later than formerly, *but alone*. My appetite is still very poor, and my pillow nearly sleepless.

"I cannot form the slightest conjecture who is to swear against me; nor is the day of my trial fixed; it may be to-morrow. The Messrs. Sheares were tried yesterday, and their trial continued from nine in the morning until half-past seven this morning, when they were found guilty. I understand my

HENRY SHEARES.

From an original Miniature in the possession of Mrs Sheares.

Published by Madden & Co.

name was not implicated in any part of this immensely long trial of twenty-two hours.

"The evidence (for me) from Belfast, is intended chiefly as a proof of the wickedness of my persecutors, and the extent of my sufferings. I have had but a few minutes' conversation with my agent, since the return of his son, for whose safety he has been extremely anxious these two days past. Mr. Horner has got an order to see me, and he paid his first visit to-day. I think this condescension in Mr. Cooke the more extraordinary, as I had been treated with such unexampled severity. You will, perhaps, be astonished when I tell you, that it was for several days the orders to the sentinel to shoot any of my fellow-prisoners who would ask me (across a yard 80 feet wide) how I was, and I locked up in a cage; nay, out of 170 prisoners, who have access to a yard from which my cell could be seen, not more than two or three would venture to *look* through the bars into my grating, of a morning, to see whether I was alive or dead.

"Mr. Curran has been with me two or three times, and expresses warm friendship. Mr. Crawford, my agent, is very indefatigable—indeed, more so than I wish. He has heard that my celebrated friend Bird, alias Smith, is once more to be my accuser; but this is too ridiculous and wicked even for the present times.

"Mr. Bond and Mr. M'Cann, it is said, are to be tried next: but their ways are so crooked that one does not know what to believe.

"Poor Mrs. Moore has suffered severely; the house

has been made a barrack, and the soldiers live at free quarters. Mrs. Bond's friendship the same as ever.

"The Messrs. Sheares got their sentence to-day at four o'clock: they are now here in irons, and will, I believe, suffer to-morrow, but in what part of the town is yet unknown.

"My mother and uncle will look after the farm, and your father after the town parks; to these three, I advise you to entrust every thing out of doors; the children will be sufficient for your care. And oh! let me entreat you once more to rear them hardily; to do every thing in the house in turn. To William, reading, writing, English well, no other language, nor dancing; to the girls, the same, with knitting and sewing, but no tambour nonsense. Let their dress be plain and homely, befitting their state; and of all things, labour to form their minds by curbing pride and inciting to virtue and industry; not by scolding and whipping, or cajoling; but by *emulation*, which is by far the safest and surest incentive to exertion.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Cell, 22nd July*, 1798.

"I know not, even yet, when my trial will come on, nor do I know of any mortal that is to appear against me; of course I must be very unprepared. The extreme rigour of my confinement is somewhat abated, and my health is wonderful.

"We have some one or other executed here almost every second day, so that death has become familiar to the inhabitants of this mansion (nearly 400 in

JOHN SHEARES.

From a Miniature by Buck.

Published by Madden & C.ᵉ

number). Messrs. Curran and Ponsonby visit me often. I believe Mr. Bond's trial will come on to-morrow. In case he should be convicted, I shall feel it most severely, for you know how much I love him for his many virtues.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Newgate, July 30th*, 1798.

"Wonderful have been the events of the last week. It is impossible for me to give them in detail; suffice it to say that we have been, in some degree, instrumental in meeting Government on the great principle of *conciliation*, which we hope will tranquillize the country, and on terms honourable to all parties. The courts-martial will cease, I believe, shortly. Mr. Bond is spared. I shall not be even tried, and there will be few, or no more, prosecutions through the country; but many of us must go to America. I am well, and yet in the same cell with Mr. Bond, who is also in perfect health, and was fully prepared to meet his fate. You will hear abominable stories about this business, for they are already afloat, but I know you will laugh at them. It will ever be the pride of my life that I was instrumental in the business.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

(*No date, probably written in July or Aug.*, 1798.)

"Enclosed is a letter I received this moment from M'G., who has interested himself on my be-

half in a very peculiar manner, and from motives which I cannot account for, considering the slightness of our acquaintance.* We are charmed with the news from coast to-day. The liberation of our brethren is highly gratifying to us all.

"S. N."

* There can be little doubt, from a subsequent reference to the same individual whose initial is above given, that Mr. James M'Guckin, the Belfast attorney, was the person alluded to.—R. R. M.

CHAPTER XV.

TO MRS. N.

"*March* 18*th*, 1799.

"We have got notice from Mr. Cooke that we are to get ready to go on board ship to-morrow morning at six o'clock; what they will do, I know not, but we have all written complaining of the short notice.

"S. N.

"M. Dowling, W. Dowdall, A. O'Connor, T. Russell, and S. Neilson, are those who have received notice."

TO MRS. N.

"*Port Glasgow, March 30th*, 1799.

"After a sea of troubles, since I wrote you last from Dublin, I am arrived here this day; we were fourteen days at sea, two of which we were in Belfast harbour riding out a storm.

"We believe we are to go to some part of Scotland, *far north*, but do not yet know what place. My health is still very poorly, but that cannot be helped. There are twenty of us in all here, among whom are the O'Connors, &c.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Aberdeen, April* 4*th*, 1799.

"After a most fatiguing journey through snows and mountains, we are arrived here to-day, being within ninety-two miles of our journey's end, (that is, Fort George.) Our treatment has been as well as our situation, and that of the country through which we had to pass, would allow, and we have reason to expect that the same liberality will be extended to us in the fort.

"My health is much better.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, April* 11*th*, 1799.

"After a very boisterous journey by land and water, we arrived here safe the day before yesterday. The English messengers treated us with civility on the road. We have got apartments in this fortress (one to each) about twenty by twenty-two feet square, *brick floors*, but comfortable beds, and the necessary furniture. The Governor is disposed to treat us as kindly as he can, consistently with his orders, and I have no doubt but we will in a few days feel ourselves very easy here; but I much dread the winter in this high northern latitude.

"I much fear hard necessity will by this time have taught you to teach the children *industry*. I have not the slightest idea of our future destination, or the probable length of our stay here; the whole business

is to me the most inexplicable mystery,—but I have long since learned whatever condition I am in, therewith to be content, so far as absence from all that I hold dear will allow me.

"S. N."

Endorsed: "Inspected and forwarded by Stuart, L.-Gov."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 20th April,* 1799.

"My health is still improving. I generally walk about an hour every day on the ramparts, where we have fine air; indeed, in this northern clime it is mostly sharp enough; but that will do us no injury during the summer. We get out from eleven until four, in sets of five each, set about, and extremely closely guarded by a number of sentinels.

"No mortal is allowed to speak to us, nor have we any sort of communication with mankind, save that the Governor grants us permission to write to our friends on urgent business, but under his immediate inspection. This, to me, you know, is no hardship; for God knows, except my family, I am long since tired of a vain, foolish, and wicked world.

"Our diet is very comfortable, with a pint of wine per man per day. We are locked up in our separate rooms at half-past nine at night; and these are opened at nine, or rather sooner, in the morning. All the remaining time we are together, as much or as little as we please; but we are debarred the use of books or newspapers. We hope this last restriction will soon be modified, however.

"All the rest are well. My love to the children; tell them that their obedience and attention to you will be the same as if paid to both of us, and therefore doubly due.

"S. N."

Endorsed: "Inspected, Stuart, L.-Gov."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 25th May*, 1799.

"Notwithstanding your disagreeable situation in many respects, yet still you are among friends, surrounded by our prattling infants (the very trouble of whom is a pleasure), and at large in the world; whilst I am debarred all those enjoyments, and *shut up*, as it were, from mankind. In such a situation the mind is thrown back on itself, and thus left to brood over the afflictions of our friends, and all the other ills which the Author of our nature has rendered inseparable from human existence. It, therefore, requires an uncommon energy, in a heart prone to sensibility, to withstand that situation, especially when attended with that *blank* of future prospects which falls to our lot.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*21st July*, 1799.

"All the other prisoners (except R. O'Connor) are in very tolerable health. Indeed, our treatment is as liberal as can be expected, when confined with the idea of inviolably *close* confinement. And it is very easy for one who, like me, has been these

three years under the dominion of rascally turnkeys in common jails, to *feel* the difference between their treatment and that kind of military restraint and of honourable treatment which is consistent and comprehensible. We know there is no possibility of holding any kind of intercourse with mankind, save what passes through the inspection of those who sent us here; but then we are relieved from the degrading situation of dependence on ruffians; our lives as well as our *feelings* are in the hands of those who are led to respect both, from the habits to which they have been accustomed from their infancy.

"I see a union is determined on between Great Britain and Ireland. I am glad of it. In a commercial point of view, it cannot be injurious: and I can see no injury the country will sustain from it politically. So decidedly am I of this opinion, that I would purchase or rent land in Ireland at this moment in preference to any country on earth, had I it in my power. Many persons, however, of great knowledge differ from me on this subject, but time will show who is right. You will say this is a point with which you have no concern. Very true. But as I know it will make a bustle with you, I wish you to be in possession of my opinion, in order that any person may have it, who thinks it worth the asking for. If I had possessed the means, I would have published my sentiments on this subject, in a short, nervous pamphlet; so deeply am I impressed with its national utility. In spite of fate, in spite of persecution, and in spite even of ingratitude itself, I find

Ireland will be uppermost in my thoughts, go where I will.*

"Our time passes here much more lightly since we have been permitted to get in books and newspapers. We get the *Star* and *Sun* daily from London; and are supplied with books at a town called Inverness, about ten miles distant. Mr. Tennent and one or two others are the principal purchasers; but we all get the reading of their books in turn, and as we are closely locked up for about eighteen hours in the twenty-four, we have no want of time to read, as well as to contemplate.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George*, 17*th August*, 1799.

"I was much gratified with the dates of all the children's ages, as well as an account of their height. I have marked both on the wall of my room, and will often cast a look on them, mixed both with pain and

* The opinion expressed in the above paragraph, if really entertained by the writer, would imply either an extraordinary degree of inconsistency, or of sagacity, that looked to the very distant and possible results of that measure for the accomplishment of his objects. The sincerity of the opinion, however, is very problematical. It is difficult to reconcile his new-born zeal for a union with England with his previous efforts to effect a separation, especially when we find the same principles on which he started in 1791, avowed in one of his letters in 1802. Perhaps the solution of the mystery will be found in the garrison regulation, which submitted the correspondence of the state prisoners to the inspection of the Governor and the Secretary of State.—R. R. M.

pleasure. I beg you will not give yourself a moment's uneasiness or anxiety about the necessaries you speak of. I can do well enough without them.

"There is no part of education more essential than that which gives an early knowledge of the world; but above all it is necessary to keep the young mind *employed.* Not to forced tasks or unreasonable attention, but to *something* (either of utility or amusement, and these can be easily united), so that the mind be not left to wander, and to become familiarized with the frivolity that is the fashion of the age; for that will certainly cause it to take a wrong direction. I hope you are also fully sensible that the only useful control is that over *the feelings*, not that which arises from *personal dread.*

"S. N.

"Our ears have been daily assailed with accounts of the executions of our most virtuous countrymen; many on the scaffold, under the forms of martial law, but many more the victims of individual Orange hatred and revenge. To stop this torrent of calamity, to preserve to Ireland her best blood for another mighty occasion, we made a sacrifice of no trivial value: we agreed to abandon our country, our families, and our friends." (The preceding paragraph is written on a separate scrap of paper, and appears to have been an inclosure in the letter.—R. R. M.)

TO MRS. N.

"*25th August*, 1779.

"I often wonder that I never hear, from you or any one else, a single account of the situation of the

country. I want to know merely the public transactions which pass before your eyes, and I wish also to know who are living and who dead among my old acquaintances; who remain in the country, and who have left it; what remnant of peace you have, and who are the distributors of justice. These, and a thousand such pieces of information, are less or more interesting to me as they relate to a community where *my all*, that is, my wife and children, are placed. It is distressing to be always under obligations to *others* for that intelligence which I might as well have myself directly, without any violation, either in letter or spirit, of that restriction which Government has thought proper to impose upon our correspondence with Ireland. I can easily perceive that it is a misunderstanding on this point that has so completely cramped all your letters.

"Their object is merely to prevent any political communications between us and Ireland, and God knows I am far from wishing to carry on any such; but it by no means implies a restriction of that familiar and frank intercourse which should subsist in every state, and under every circumstance, between a wife and a husband, when free of any political object.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 5th September*, 1799.

"I will give you some advice still further respecting the children. The eldest must be by this time turning their attention to books: it is of much importance that those, and those only, be put into

their hands, which will tend to their improvement. With this view I have consulted with my friend and fellow-prisoner Mr. Chambers, whose opinions and mine perfectly coincide, as to the necessity of combining instruction with amusement. I will certainly be most highly gratified with the portraits you speak of, *but* there is *one* other (if it could be added) would indeed make me happy, so far as the imagination can make a shadow pass for a reality.

"Our situation here remains as formerly; Mr. O'Connor's health is still very poorly; he expects his wife in a day or two. Emmet has some expectations of a similar kind; I hope they will not be disappointed. Our health is tolerable. With respect to the spiritual direction of our children, I hope you will bear in mind this important lesson, (though Sam Saw, Dick Moon, or Jack Gardiner, may choose your pastor,) that you will yourself educate our children in the *true* principles of Christianity, which believe me are not to be acquired by a mere *Sunday show*. No! they are to be instilled in the life and conversation, and that only by precept and example. Ignorant creatures may think adherence alone to external matters of main importance; less ignorant persons may chiefly confide in stated public duties, as they are called; but for my part, I think the real Christian, whose foundation *is sure,* is he who follows *the example of Jesus;* and I almost despair of having these matters clearly and practically laid before you, because I know they are not conformable to the common gait of the world. This consideration gives me little pain; but my trust is still kept up by the hope that a Divine Providence

will bring light out of all this darkness, and that the day is by no means remote when these important truths shall be made manifest to all who *will* believe. In politics, my wish ever was the public good. So in religion, the desire of my heart is, that all mankind may be brought into the way of the Almighty, and that in his own good time.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 8th September*, 1799.

"I hope the profiles will not be omitted *one and all.* I wonder you should question respecting the acceptability of *one* of them. They will all be gratifying, but that one peculiarly so. As to the miniature, it has not come to your hand, because the original was flattered with hopes of being admitted to partake of her much loved husband's imprisonment; but all of a sudden that is denied her, and she has been tantalized with the *indulgence* of travelling by sea and land, upwards of four hundred miles, only to *see* her husband in the presence of an officer, after being liable to *personal search* going in and out. Such an indulgence will no doubt be spurned as it ought; but the misfortune is that she is in all probability on her way, ere she knows of this restriction. That every step should be taken by Government to prevent any unwarrantable political correspondence between us and our friends in Ireland, if any of us were prone to carry on such, I think perfectly correct under their system; but to deprive a wife the sweet indulgence of alleviating the horrors of a pri-

son to her husband, by sharing it with him, is, I think, beyond their calculation, and must in this instance, I am persuaded, have arisen from some gross misinformation.

"I had almost forgot to tell you, that the Colonel Hay, who has been killed in Holland, is the same gentleman who superintended our route from our landing till our arrival at Fort George. He was specially deputed by Government for the purpose. I am bound also to add, that his conduct was every way becoming a gentleman, which causes us to feel, in a greater degree, his loss. We are further interested, inasmuch as he has left a wife and helpless family behind him. Such, however, is the fortune of war; and oh! may nations once learn, and that speedily, how futile are the results of all this warfare, whether successful or not. 'Tis He who rules on high that laughs to scorn all those attempts of nation against nation. His ways are at times inscrutable; but they will terminate finally for their happiness.

"This worthy man, who conducted us to this place, little thought he was leaving us in quiet and repose, whose situation he lamented—whilst he, who was basking in the sunshine of Court favour, pursued his career to immediate death!!

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George*, 15*th Sept.*, 1799.

"We have nothing new in this prison. Mrs. O'Connor and two children still remain here. Mrs. Emmet has not arrived, and none others have been expected.

"Our allowance of coals and candles is increased as the winter approaches; and, indeed, the Governor seems disposed to make our situation as comfortable as the nature of the place and the strictness of his orders will permit. We are by no means harassed with any shade of that minor and oppressive tyranny which, though it has no concern with the object of Government, yet tantalizes for the purpose of extortion, and is the cause of unnecessary pain and sorrow. *In a word, we are close prisoners,* in the utmost strictness of the term; but then we are *used like men,* by those whose *habit* or *principle* is not to look on human suffering with pleasure. Of the compact between the Irish Government and us, (in which I was originally the principal,) I must be silent; but am certainly bound to say, that the *English* Government has not, in general, testified any desire to embitter our confinement, further than our complete seclusion may be construed.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 22nd Sept.,* 1799.

"I was exceedingly vexed to find, by yours of the 14th, which I received two days ago, that your illness had left such a depression on your spirits. If you permit yourself to fall into despondence, the situation of our affairs is hopeless indeed; but I cannot think that possible, after the singular fortitude you have so long displayed, under the most pressing afflictions. I conjure you, my dear Nancy, by the conjugal affection which has been the delight of our lives—by the

love you bear our offspring, as well as by the sure hope of a protecting Providence—not to give way to melancholy. It is true, a heavy hand has been laid upon us; but what are our sufferings compared to those of others! Let it never be forgotten, that 'though the birds have nests and the foxes have holes, yet *the Saviour of mankind had not whereon to lay his head.*' Still bear this great truth in view; and in looking around you, when you see how the wicked flourish, remember, however, that it is not all gold that glitters: that which is very fair without, is often very foul within. Let us, then, console ourselves with that which no wealth can give—*conscious rectitude;* leave the rest to Providence, who will, doubtless, crown your industrious efforts with the necessary success.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N., AT 13, BRIDGE STREET, DUBLIN.

"*Fort George, 6th Oct.*, 1799.

"Your situation is painful indeed; and what renders it more distressing to me is, that my situation puts it out of my power to be in the least degree useful to you. Still, however, I will hope for the best; and I would recommend it to you the more earnestly to place your confidence in that Providence whose aid is omnipotent, and who has promised his peculiar care to the widow and the fatherless. Prospects which at present lower may brighten, and your success in business may yet go beyond your utmost hopes. I place great confidence in John's friendship, as well as his integrity. To the friends who have

stood by you in your distress I can only say, at present, that from the bottom of my heart I thank them: they will find their best reward, however, in the gratifying sensations of an approving conscience. Oh, may I have it yet in my power to repay their generosity! I could have wished that some others, from whom I had a *right* to expect it, had acted a similar part: but of them I will say nothing; only I hope neither themselves nor their offspring may ever stand in need of the protecting hand of friendship, and implore that protection in vain.

"You seem to imagine that I have heard something detrimental to the clergyman you had lately on trial. Not at all—I only heard he was supported by a certain description of persons, and that induced me to give you a caution as to the children; indeed, I hope you will keep them free of any improper bias, but continue to them, a love of *truth* and *Christianity*, with an utter abhorrence of falsehood and hypocrisy. There is a maxim of an ancient heathen author, which my father recommended to me when I was a boy; it had a great effect on my mind at the time, and is worth your teaching them: it is thus translated:—

'Be this your wall of brass, *no guilt* to know,
Nor let *one crime* sit blushing on your brow.'"

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, October* 13, 1799.

"It is very hard, indeed, that this kind of intercourse should be subject to so much vexatious delay. It is true, our correspondence does not relate to

matters of mighty consequence; our commercial affairs have been reduced to a narrow compass indeed; but surely it should be felt that it relates to *our all*, and what is even more important to a feeling heart, it is the communication of mind between a distant husband and his wife, between a father and his children.

The nights are stretching out now very fast; but they are not a little beguiled by several of the prisoners who play on different musical instruments in their respective rooms, sometimes to a late hour; we all hear and listen with pleasure, although separated by bars and sentinels. There are no less than seven of the twenty that play on some instrument or other. The principal part, however, of our solitary hours is spent in reading. I then devote one to them *that are far away*. "S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, October* 20, 1799.

"I am often at a loss to know what are the grounds on which you form an opinion of my health and spirits. If I don't write, I am unwell; if I write and moralize, I am unwell and in bad spirits! If I differ in any point from the opinions of those who write to me, I am still worse! and if I do not *fill the sheet*, my situation is deplorable in the extreme! These considerations call to my mind the days when *mania* and *cunning*, servility and *unprecedented boldness*, terror of death and *unfeeling hardihood*, were ascribed to me all at the same moment. I trust,

however, now, as then, I have all my mind about me, and that I am always actuated by the most ardent wish of advising (acting is out of the question) for the best.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, November* 5, 1799.

"We have this day received notice that our letters from Ireland must in future come through the Secretary's office, in the same manner that ours have hitherto *gone*. You will, therefore, hereafter, direct to me as usual, but enclose your letter, unsealed, in a cover, directed to *His Majesty's Secretary for the Civil Department, Dublin*. The letters will be forwarded by him to the Duke of Portland's office in London, and thence they will be conveyed to us. It is impossible to divine what has given rise to this measure, for I am confident that no improper correspondence (I mean no political) has been attempted by any prisoner in this Fort."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, November* 17, 1799.

"These long nights have reminded me to impress upon you a particular duty respecting the children; I mean to guard them against the foolish nonsense to which they might otherwise be subjected about hobgoblins, fairies, ghosts, and such other fantasies as girls are accustomed to conjure up. Nothing tends more to weaken intellect, even in its more matured stages, than those illusions which

are so often impressed upon the youthful mind. A person possessed of such notions is not only unhappy, but is also incapacitated from accomplishing a variety of useful avocations; besides, he is perpetually subject to every imposture connected with superstitious fraud. Let, then, the children learn, that *God alone is present every where*, and *that darkness is subjected to his power*. Show them, by constant experience, that there are none of these frightful beings existing, but in the silly brains of *cowards* and *fools*. Applaud the *good sense* of one who rummages all the dark places and brings what is wanted without a candle. Reason with those who start back affrighted, and having convinced them of their error, a very little time will effect a cure, unless you are counteracted by the servant; and if you find that out, let nothing prevent you from parting with her. The well-ordering of your children's minds depends upon it. "S. N."

CHAPTER XVI.

TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL STEWART, GOVERNOR OF FORT GEORGE.

"*Fort George, 8th Jan.*, 1800.

"SIR,

"I AM one of a number of state prisoners who applied to you a few days since for the purpose of obtaining such an arrangement respecting the subsistence allowed by Government, as might tend farther to cover our actual expenses in this Fort. You were pleased to approve the motives which led to the application, and kind enough to suggest a plan which might accomplish the principal object we had in view, without curtailing the supply of our table. For myself (and I am confident every other gentleman has the same opinion) I felt this proposal of yours as an additional proof of your desire to make our situation as little irksome as the circumstances of the case will permit; but I would entreat your attention to a view of the subject which perhaps had escaped you.

"I am a man, Sir, far advanced in the fourth year of my confinement. At its commencement I was in affluence. My entire property since that time has

been destroyed: I will not say how. Suffice it to say that my family has been overwhelmed with misfortune. On the one hand, I cannot bear to add to their misery, whilst I am able to avoid it by submitting to privation myself. On the other, I do not wish to have my name bandied about the public offices as a petitioning pauper, whilst I am able by any means to confine my expenditure within the allowance. Such are the facts, and such my feelings. I forbear to press them by unnecessary arguments upon one of your sensibility; I am sure it would be unnecessary. I will, therefore, only add that I have determined to forego supper, in order to make such a saving as may provide for the expense of my washing, and such other essential necessaries, provided this can be accomplished without giving you or others any inconvenience. I wait your sanction. With additional trouble, Sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"SAMUEL NEILSON.

"You will please to observe that, by merely abstaining from supper, no change, such as catering, is occasioned, as I mean to order nothing for myself."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 26th Jan.* 1800.

"I remain in very good health, and have employed myself, these three days past, in framing and glazing the children's profiles. They are neatly finished, and hang over my fire-place.

"Our mornings, noons, and nights, pass here the

same in perpetual succession. We are not perplexed with any of the vicissitudes of mankind, and could we once abstract ourselves from those we hold dear, our view of the idle, foolish, giddy world, would be a mixture of pity and contempt. Still, however, one's mind is imperceptibly drawn into the vortex where our friends are struggling. I cannot *forget* that I once *had* a home. I cannot help feeling that I have a family.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George*, 16*th Feb.*, 1800.

"I have received yours of the 28th last month, as well as that of the 2nd inst., and am happy to find that you are not by any means cast down at the manifest coldness, (not to say want of friendship,) evinced by a man I very much loved,—no doubt he has his reasons for taking the part he does. I will leave him to his own reflections. I wish not to dwell upon this painful subject. Man is subject, nay, prone to err; may a consciousness of error correct those who go astray! I can easily perceive, however, that there are some who calculate their measures upon the ground of *my eternal absence*. They may yet find themselves mistaken, and I desire that such calculations may not dispirit you. I have avowed my conduct to the Government, they are convinced of its criminality, but I hope they are also convinced that I am utterly incapable of infringing any agreement I may ever enter into with them. I hope yet to return,

but it will be on honourable terms, and to the utter confusion of those who have laid their heads together, perhaps, to prolong our situation.

"S. N."

TO HIS DAUGHTERS.

"*Fort George, 23rd March*, 1800.

"MY DEAR CHILDREN,

"Wherever you go, and whatever you do, remember that you are in the presence of *God*, who overlooks all your conduct, and before whose judgment you will one day come. He rewards the virtuous and punishes the guilty. I know you will exert yourselves to obtain his reward, and in so doing every honest person will love you. Then I will delight in being your affectionate father.

"SAMUEL NEILSON."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 30th March*, 1800.

"I see by the papers that some of the state prisoners in Ireland have been liberated lately. I am very happy to see it, and I hope the poor Northerns, who have been so long, and in my opinion so unnecessarily detained in the Dublin prisons, will also be liberated. As to us *deportés*, I see no disposition to recollect us; we are put like old debts in the back of the book, and may lie so until chance or some incident shall bring a curious eye to overhaul the musty pages which enclose us; although God knows how the *selection* was hit upon, for many in this place were never calculated to set the Liffey on fire.

"We expect Mrs. Emmet here in the course of the summer.

"Mrs. O'Connor and her children remain with Mr. O'Connor, and they have all the liberty of *ranging the Fort and neighbourhood*, the other nineteen of us are closely confined as usual."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, April 20th*, 1800.

"Our situation here remains for ever the same; no alteration of any kind has taken place. The prisoners are mostly all in tolerable good health, and generally speaking very tranquil; we have a variety of amusements among us, some read, some study one or other science, some perform on the fiddle or the flute, some improve themselves in the languages, and *others* live pretty much by themselves. I have the pleasure of living on the most agreeable terms with my fellow prisoners, only there is *one* or *two* I don't choose to be very intimate with. I am but a plain man myself, and I don't like those who affect to be otherwise."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, May 18th*, 1800.

"I have a piece of news to give you which will be very acceptable. We have got liberty to bathe in the sea at the foot of the ramparts three times a week, and I have already bathed twice, and will every day I can. We owe this indulgence to the kindness of the Governor and the ready acquiescence of the *British*

Government, and it affords to my mind a convincing proof that (however they may act contrary to my opinion of right) security, not punishment, is their object, in our tedious captivity.

" Mrs. O'Connor and her family are still here, but Mrs. Emmet has hitherto failed in all her applications; there appears to be *a marked* difference: so it was in days of yore. I remember Mrs. Haslitt, a successful advocate when Mrs. Redfern failed. For myself, I must say that (with some exceptions arising from local influence) I have not personally to complain of the conduct of the Government to me; yet, still I feel that one lady should not be permitted and another refused. For us alas! my dear Nancy, there is no hope of that kind of meeting, but we have the *sure and certain hope* of a meeting beyond the grave; where ' the wicked cease from troubling, and the virtuous have eternal rest.' In this world even, I doubt not of our happy reunion, and the occasion may arrive before either of us are aware; let us, then, rest assured that the all-wise Disposer of heaven will bring about these happy events in his own good time, and in the interim let us profit by our misfortunes so as to frame our minds to virtue.

" S. N."

Enclosed in a letter, dated 8th June, 1800, addressed to his daughters :—

" Would we attain the happiest state,
That here can be our share;
No fleeting pleasures should elate,
No grief beget despair.

No injury, fierce anger raise,
  No honour tempt to pride;
No vain desires of empty praise
  Should in the soul abide.
No charms of youth or beauty move,
  The constant, settled breast;
Who leaves a passage, free to love,
  Admits a wily guest.
In virtue's path, the wealth of life,
  True peace of mind is found,
The greatest blessing, God doth give,
  Or can on earth be own'd."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, June* 15*th*, 1800.

"I am sure you will rejoice with me, on hearing that poor Mrs. Emmet, is, after all, permitted to see her husband: she will be here, I suppose, by the time this reaches you, and will, I understand, bring two or three of her children with her.

"As to the notion of you and I ever meeting in this place, it is totally out of the question, for a thousand reasons; but I confess to you I have some idea that one of the children might reside here with me. I will not dilate upon the advantages of education on the one hand, or of beloved company on the other. I will equally avoid the obstacles that may prevent even the possibility I refer to; I will therefore only just throw out the thought, that should leave be granted, should an opportunity of conveyance offer, and should you approve, I would wish to have one of the children (which you should

think fit) with me, and I know the expense of maintenance would be less than at home. I have started this idea, but I will not indulge in it until I hear from you; and I hope you will consult our friends, thinking with you, that years may pass over me in this dreary mansion, and these the most precious to the forming the minds of our children. I add no more.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, August* 17*th*, 1800.

"Since my last, I have received yours of the 3rd, and had, the day before, been made easy by the arrival of Mrs. Emmet, who brought the pleasing news that you and the children were well. She arrived here, together with her three children on Wednesday last, in perfect health, but very much fatigued.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, Sept. 7th,* 1800.

"With respect to William, it is hard to say when another opportunity of his coming here may occur, perhaps never. I shall, however, take the liberty of making an application on that head to Government. I hope they will not debar me the duty of assisting to educate my only son. I will let you know the result as soon as I receive an answer.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, Sept. 21st,* 1800.

"I am very happy to find that the regularity of our correspondence has so far resumed a degree of consistence, and am rather inclined with you to impute the interruption to some other cause than the subjects of our letters. I am sure it is far from my intention to touch on any matter calculated to give offence. It is true, an occasional harsh expression may drop from me, but those who inspect our letters should recollect that it drops from one who has commenced his *fifth year* of close confinement and seclusion from all he holds dear,—from one whose independent property has been annihilated by a military force, whose *wife and family* are thereby left totally destitute, and from one whose term of captivity is *indefinite.*

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, Nov. 2nd,* 1800.

"Mr. Tennent has received the melancholy account of the death of my old friend Mr. B. This has been to me an occasion of much regret, as I knew him well, and always considered him a friendly, honourable man. I apprehend he has left his circumstances very much involved, and I am sure his wife and children *are very little adapted from their education to meet poverty.* This makes such a blow come with double force, and should impress upon parents

the absolute necessity of preparing their children *to live by industry*, independent of circumstances. There is no certainty in wealth, no security in grandeur; industry and virtue are the only basis of security here, the safest foundation for our hopes hereafter.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, Nov. 9th*, 1800.

"I regret exceedingly that we missed the opportunity of Mrs. Emmet's coming; she, and her delightful children are in perfect health, and send their best wishes to you.

"Mr. Tennent's brother, Robert,* arrived here two days ago from London—an order for his admission had preceded him some days; he spends his time here with his brother, and I am sure he tends very much to alleviate his sufferings, as he has not seen him these twelve or fourteen years, and from all I can learn is a very accomplished, amiable young man.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, Nov. 16th*, 1800.

"Mr. Emmet has got liberty to walk with Mrs. Emmet and the children anywhere *within the walls*, accompanied by one attendant; in order to understand the indulgence, you must know that our space for exercise consists of two small divisions, enclosed

* The late Dr. Tennent, of Belfast; a man as much estimated for his private worth as for his public spirit and integrity.—R. R. M.

and separated by double rows of tall paling. Mr. R. O'Connor has had this indulgence, together with liberty to take the air *out of the Fort*, ever since his illness last year.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, Dec. 6th*, 1800.

"Well, my dear, these times must have an end, and their periods are in the hands of an all-wise Providence, whose ways, though mysterious, must be right; in the mean time, we must endeavour to console ourselves with this consideration, that whatever is best for us will inevitably happen, though our dim eyes cannot discern every part of its progress.

"All your friends here desire to be remembered to you, among whom are Mrs. Emmet and her family; she is very well, and as comfortable as can be expected in a prison. Mr. R. Tennent is still here with his brother; he appears unwilling to leave him in this dreary solitude.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, Dec.* 14*th*, 1800.

"I perceive your spirits have been but poorly: indeed, how can they be expected to be over good? Yet, I never can impress it too strongly on you, that let your difficulties and perplexities be ever so great, *you can gain nothing by fretting*. On the contrary, you impair that firmness of mind so necessary to enable you to meet the tempests which seem to

attend our forlorn situation. You ought always to keep in view the celebrated saying of Dr. Franklin: 'There are two species of disasters which do not afflict me, the first those *I can*, and the other, those which *I cannot* help; for if I can help them I set about it immediately, and if I cannot, I am sure fretting does me no good.' A higher authority says, 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,' and even 'affliction will be blessed for good in those who love and fear God.' On this subject of the all-wise providence of God, I would recommend the 107th Psalm, as containing a clear view of his ways to man. And believe me, you will, in all cases of distress, find abundant ground of comfort *in the Bible.*

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, Dec. 28th*, 1800.

"For a wonder, I can tell you a piece of news from this fortress. Mr. Roger O'Connor and his family left us on Christmas-day; they are gone to London for the purpose of obtaining medical advice. I suppose, in the mean time, he will be in prison there, or, at least, under some kind of restraint; but probably his entire liberation is at no great distance. We were a little crowded together before this change, for want of a sufficiency of rooms, but now Mrs. Emmet has got their apartments, and every thing has resumed its former state. There is nothing she and her family more anxiously desire than that William should come here in the spring; they promise

themselves that his habits and manners are such as to make him a most desirable playfellow, and, on my part, I never saw children I would so soon have him with. I need not tell you, therefore, that I wish you to lay out everything for his coming here, as soon as the severities of the season are over, should an opportunity offer. When Mr. Patten was here he signified an intention of returning in the spring with another of Mr. Emmet's children—this would be a good opportunity for William to come here."

TO HIS CHILDREN.

"*Fort George, January* 18*th*, 1801.

"My dear children,

"I am extremely delighted with your very great progress in writing, and am only anxious on that subject that you will not forget what you have been taught. But my great and increasing care is, about your progress in the acquisition of industrious habits. It should be a first principle with people that they should actually *earn* whatever they *enjoy*. Writing is good and reading is good; but no learning should entitle a person to live by the fruits of another's industry. Your mother will help you to apply this principle. State your objections to it, if you have any, in your next letter, and show me, if you can, why one part of the community should live by the labours of the other.

"S. N."

CHAPTER XVII.

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, Feb. 6th,* 1801.

"Mr. Roger O'Connor has been liberated in London. He has given £9,000 bail to reside in such place in England as Government shall point out. This may open the way to further liberations."

TO HIS DAUGHTERS.

"*Fort George, April 5th,* 1801.

"My dear children,

"I am happy to find that you are so fond of geography, and coming on so well in it. I am sorry that this place is not laid down upon any of your maps. It lies 10 miles north-east of Inverness; but you will observe in tracing the distances upon maps, always to add *a fifth* at least to the real distance, in order to allow for the turns and windings of the roads. It is often *much more;* thus, for instance, Edinburgh is distant from this place 160 miles by the nearest road, and 225 by the post-road, although it is not above 110 by the map.

Fort George lies about 200 miles north-north-east

of Belfast by the map, and yet the distance by the nearest road is at least 300 miles. The roads in this country are, however, uncommonly circuitous, on account of the mountains and friths, or firths, which intersect it.

"I have much pleasure in telling Sophia, that her last piece which she enclosed to me was so much esteemed here for good writing, that Mr. Emmet employed it as a *copy* for his son Robert, with whose education he is taking much pains."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 3rd May*, 1801.

"I am both glad and sorry to tell you a piece of news respecting Mrs. Emmet: she was delivered, on Thursday evening last, of a still-born child, but she is in a very fair way of recovery. Her illness occasioned great uneasiness amongst us. The idea of a delicate woman, thus situated, confined in a close prison, seven hundred miles from her friends, and without a single female acquaintance to attend on her, was very shocking to a feeling mind. Your old friend, Mr. Chambers, has got liberty to ride or walk about the neighbourhood, accompanied by an attendant, on account of his delicate state of health. The other prisoners are all pretty well: for my own part, I am as well as you can possibly expect. We bathe every morning at eight o'clock, and we get liberty now to walk, in the evening, upon the ramparts; we never got it, until now, after four o'clock.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George*, 17*th May*, 1801.

"I had been for some time suspecting the coolness you speak of, but I am, as well as you, totally at a loss to guess the reason. If it took its rise in a certain quarter, it must be wholly owing to some misrepresentations of the gentleman, who occasioned you so much pain the last time you saw me, and who had, for a time, entire dominion over him; that, however, as well as many other delusions, is completely done away with. He has been gradually opening his eyes for eighteen months past, and his mind appears now to be settled. Our intimacy has rather increased in proportion as the other has subsided, though, in all human probability, it will never be what it once was; for though I can never have the same opinion of the man that I had before, possibly he may feel the same way respecting me. Be that as it may, however, I should be very sorry to change minds with him. These are considerations on which it is painful to dwell; and sure I am, that where a life of good intentions and integrity has a few imperfections, it is but for our own and others' happiness to forget them as much as possible: none of us are perfect; and let us ever bear in mind the passage in the Lord's Prayer—'*Forgive*,' *&c.*

"I am exceedingly happy that you let the girls go to the Grove when asked. All my experience, the results of all my most profound thinking, lead me more to attach myself to the Christian system of extinguishing animosities. See Matt. v. 23, 24;

Luke xvii. 3; Rom. xiv. 10. Be assured this is the surest road to happiness here and hereafter. I see what you say about the public examination of the children. I am sorry that the examination is confined to the Catechism. The first part of it is far above the comprehension of children; all the latter part of it, from the preface to the commandments, to the end, is very proper, and should be deeply impressed on the memory. But I would also wish they should get by heart the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew; the first, second, eighth, fifteenth, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, thirty-seventh, forty-first, and several other Psalms. In a word, I would rather they should be intimately acquainted with the *Scriptures*, than ever so well versed in the best theological speculations that were ever devised by man. The former will make them *Christians*, the latter merely *sectarians*."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George*, 1*st June*, 1801.

"I hope you will labour to prevent the children from acquiring that dreadful fear of fever, or any other of those timidities which are so very injurious to our own happiness, and which render us so little capable of rendering assistance to the afflicted. Believe me, my dear Nancy, the guarding of their minds against such fears is one of your important duties to them; and your own experience will enable you to enforce it. Impress upon them without ceasing this great truth—*That Providence cares for all its creatures.* Will He who has our hairs numbered,

and whose providence extends even over the life of a sparrow, punish us with the visitation of sickness for our tenderness to a distressed fellow creature? No, my dear, humanity, reason, and religion, equally forbid such apprehensions.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 7th June,* 1801.

"The Misses Emmet send their best respects to you, and Mrs. Emmet requests me to represent to you how very sensible she is of your friendship, manifested in your anxiety about her illness, and your happiness on her recovery. She desires to be most affectionately remembered to you. I always take a kind of melancholy pleasure in spending an hour with her and the children; their sweet prattle and her maternal superintendence greatly interest me. And then, alas! I recollect how far I am from my own.

"I have nothing new to tell you. I hear nothing of A. O'Connor's liberation. I fancy his hopes begin to decline. Your friends here are all well. R. S., who has been in very low spirits for some time past, is greatly pleased at learning the perfect recovery of his daughter. John Sweetman is getting much better; he is able to go out to the ramparts, but not yet without a stick. As for myself, I continue to enjoy most excellent health. I have been taught, in the hard school of adversity, in all my trials, to maintain an equanimity of spirit. I should profit ill

by what I have felt and suffered if I were not pretty well prepared for any event that may befall me.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George*, 14*th June*, 1801.

"We are all in tolerable good health. Mr. Emmet has got permission to walk out with his wife and children, accompanied by an attendant. This indulgence, inasmuch as it tends to re-establish Mrs. Emmet's health, has given me much pleasure, as indeed it has done to most of us. Our bathing continues as usual; and, for my own part, I have not enjoyed so good health since my mind was made uneasy about the Star prosecutions in 1793; from that period, as you may well recollect, I could never reckon on my liberty or my life, and was of course in a state of perpetual anxiety, which was much increased by the uneasiness of my partners. What I have been made to feel since that time has cured me perfectly of all idle apprehensions.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*28th June*, 1801.

"I am very happy to tell you, that since my last we have been indulged with the liberty of playing ball from eleven till three, every day; yesterday was the first day, and I availed myself of it with great avidity. I am sure you will be glad to hear that I was able to play the whole four hours, and with much more strength and activity than I ever experienced since

I began to play ball; that is, since I was a prisoner, or rather, ten months after my imprisonment. The place destined for us to take this exercise in, is the bottom of the ditch of the fort, between two ramparts; but we have great abundance of room, and *a very good wall.* This is another consequence of the governor's humanity; for to him we owe it."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 12th July,* 1801.

"The unsettled state in which the office of Secretary of State has been for the last five months, prevented me from making my application for liberty for William to come here; but I really do not know whether his Grace of Portland or Lord Pelham is the actual Secretary. Besides, the governor of this fort, when I stated the subject to him, at the time of Mr. Fletcher going to Ireland, appeared to set his face against it; and I am very loth to take any step that had not his entire sanction, because his general conduct towards us has at all times been marked with a strong character of humanity. I am the more vexed at these obstructions, because Mr. Cuthbert has at length succeeded in obtaining liberty for his wife and niece to come and reside with him.

"Mr. Tennent has heard several times of late from his brother, who is still in London, and who, I hope, may finally succeed in operating his liberation.*

"S. N."

* When Robert Tennent applied for the liberation of his brother, he at the same time pressed for permission for the child of Neilson to be admitted into Fort George, and to remain there with his father, and succeeded in both objects.—R. R. M.

TO MRS. N.

(In reference to the severe illness of his son at this period.)

"*Fort George, 26th July*, 1801.

"As to the possible event, I am happy to find that your mind is made up and prepared for the worst. This is the true frame of mind which reason and religion equally point out. The loss of a much loved child is no doubt one of the most afflicting trials that can befall a human being; but when we consider the mass of wickedness and of sorrow from which he is snatched away, and when we look forward to the well-founded hopes of a glorious eternity, we should bow to the stroke, and say with reverence, 'The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'

"S. N."

TO MRS. N. FROM HER SON.

"*Fort George, 24th August*, 1801.

"My dear mother,

"I like this place very well; my father is very well, as are the rest of the prisoners.

"I had the pleasure of seeing a little dog and a hare. Mr. Wilson has the hare, and Mr. Cormick has the dog. We had a very pleasant voyage, only Monday, which was a little stormy. Mrs. Cuthbert and Miss Park took great care of me. Mrs. Emmet

will be as kind to me as if I was her own child. My father had a pretty little bed and arm-chair ready for me."

"*Fort George, 30th August*, 1801.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"I am sorry to tell you that Mrs. Cuthbert has been very ill ever since the day I came here, my arm is almost stout, and Doctor Macneven says it will be as well as ever. I bathe a little every morning; at first I was afraid to dive, but now I am growing bolder. I am counting with Mr. Dowling in the morning, reading and grammar with Doctor Dickson, in the middle of the day, and writing and reading with my father, who is also beginning to teach me geography, in the afternoon. I play in the evenings with Robert Emmet and his sisters: sometimes I sup at their mother's, and sometimes in our own room, on bread and milk. I go to bed at nine, and rise before eight o'clock. Father sits an hour later than me. My love to my sisters.

"Your dutiful Son,

"WILLIAM NEILSON."

The boy was then eight years old, and by all accounts was a youth of extraordinary talents, and of the most engaging qualities.—R. R. M.

WILLIAM NEILSON TO HIS SISTER.

"*Fort George, 7th Sept.*, 1801.

"DEAR SISTER,

"I suppose you have heard from my mother, all about my coming here. It is a fortnight since I came, and I like this place very well. I knew my father by the picture, he looks much better than the last time I saw him. This is a fine place for education. I am reading, writing, and I play a good deal besides; Robert Emmet and his sisters are fine play-fellows; and their mother is very kind to me; all the prisoners are very attentive to me too. I bathe every morning at eight o'clock, and my arm is already quite well. Tell Sophia that her old friend Master John Sweetman is here, and very well.

"Yours,

"WM. NEILSON."

FROM WM. NEILSON TO HIS MOTHER.

"*Fort George*, 14*th Sept.*, 1801.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"Every thing here is very agreeable, and my father takes great care of me. The little Emmets are fine play-fellows, but I am ten hours every day at my education, and I think it not long. I sleep very sound all night, and in the morning my father awakes me to my lessons. He says, I am in a fair way of being a very good scholar. My father will tell you in his letter, all about poor Mr. and Mrs. Cuthbert, the other prisoners are pretty well. I get my copies

from Mr. Dowdall, who sends his best respects to you. Tell John we have got no bag-pipes yet, nor any errand-going dogs.

"I am your dutiful son,

"WILLIAM NEILSON."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George*, 14*th Sept.*, 1801.

"Your boy continues as well in every respect as you could possibly wish, he evinces every day new powers of mind, which excite in me the most lively presages of his capacity, when it shall be matured by instruction and experience. He is always under the eye of Dr. Dickson, Mr. Dowling, myself, or Mrs. Emmet. His instruction is so mingled with agreeable conversation, that he always prefers it to play, and my company to that of any other person, young or old. As to wine you may be at your ease, he will never taste anything here, liquid, but milk and water while he has his health. You seem to me (by your recent letters) to have wound up your heart in this boy, to an extent that borders on being sinful, sinful as respects the influence that might be exerted on your own health and happiness; especially, should any dispensation of Providence tear him from you. I really do not know how you would be able to meet such a stroke, and yet it is one for which we ought always to be prepared, being, as it is, in the ordinary course of human events. It is not very easy to describe the pleasure I feel in the boy, who far exceeds my most sanguine expectations, and I sup-

pose I possess as much rational affection for him as ever a father did for a son, and yet I hold it my duty to be prepared to resign him to his Maker, whenever he shall be demanded, without repining.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 28th Sept.*, 1801.

"As to William's love of truth and dutiful disposition, I find the boy fully to my mind; and upon these grounds I hope it will not be difficult to plant and cultivate the love of every other virtue. Indeed his propensities seem to lean towards everything that is good already. The worst a cool observer could say of him is, that he is a little *forgetful;* and he has some *timidity*, which, though some people think it is likely to keep the young out of danger's way, is generally the most direct road to it—at least, if not the most direct, the most certain. This last, I am confident, will be easily removed; the former is perhaps constitutional, and I should be the last person living to be censorious respecting it, for I never was blessed with a tenacious memory, especially respecting trivial matters."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 5th Oct.*, 1801.

"I received yours of the 23rd, communicating the unpleasant intelligence of Mr. Lowry's death. For my part, I am inclined to think that unavailing regrets betray a want of a proper view of the constant

superintendence of a Divine providence. If there be any truth in the information we have so often and so powerfully impressed upon us, that 'our days are all numbered,' there is then a 'time appointed for all living,' beyond which no one can prolong the term. If mankind believed, and acted on their belief in these matters, what a world of care and trouble might not they save themselves. Be this at it will, however, we cannot help feeling grieved at the departure of dear friends, even though a well-spent life should make us rejoice in reflecting that they are gone to a better and a happier country, to one where the power of man cannot long deprive them of the society of their virtuous friends. Such were my feelings on learning the death of this old, worthy, and affectionate friend.

"Your son continues in good health, and gains ground daily in every branch of his education, as well as in the esteem of the prisoners. He spends a good part of play time at his flute, and can already turn a tune with a good deal of taste. Mr. Cormick, who is his musical superintendent, says he will be a proficient in it: indeed he appears perfectly capable of improvement in any thing to which his attention may be turned. I think in another month he will be fully equal to Robert Emmet in every thing except Latin—nine months' start are not so soon overtaken. I keep, as he tells you in his letter, a weekly journal, including the reports of Dr. Dickson, Mr. Dowling, &c., upon which I make my comments. It is inconceivable the anxiety he expresses to have all

this favourably wound up on Saturday night. I keep, also, upon the wall, a little pencil memorandum of such trivial faults as arise from forgetfulness, &c. These I rub out as soon as the occasion ceases. In reality we get on as well in every respect as you could wish; and, although we are intimate even to the greatest familiarity, and have several plays at which we amuse ourselves, yet on the slightest word, or even look, of seriousness, he is all attention and obedience.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George*, 11*th Oct.*, 1801.

"Since my last, a most extraordinary event has taken place, of which you will, of course, be informed before your receiving this: I mean *Peace* between England and the French Republic! Thus has at length terminated a war, which has occasioned so much human misery, and against which, as you may well recollect, I early and constantly raised my feeble voice. Now that it has terminated, I hope the necessary steps will be taken to heal the wounds it has given rise to. Along with matters of more extensive and general concern, I trust it will be the means of our so long-wished-for re-union. Upon this subject we have, as yet, received no notice or intimation of any kind, though we are in daily expectation of it.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"18*th October*, 1801.

"You will, no doubt, be very anxious to hear from me, and yet I have it not in my power to give you any satisfaction. That our liberation will soon take place seems to admit of no doubt, but in what manner is altogether uncertain. As for myself, I have learned (as I have often told you) to be easy in my mind, and prepared fully for any event; anxious to be restored to my family, for the purpose of exercising my abilities and industry for their maintenance, I am by no means wedded to a spot. Love of country is a natural feeling, and no one ever possessed it more than myself; yet I am able to endure a separation from it, rather than continue here a living burthen to my friends, wasting away that life which might be so usefully devoted to the comfort of my wife, and the independence and education of my children. In case of expatriation, I will of course prefer going to a country where liberty and property appear to be best secured by a mild Government, emanating from the public will;—such a country is America. I have, besides these, other ties, which lead me to prefer it to any other, save my native land. I am very happy to tell you, that William continues to enjoy good health, and to improve very rapidly in his education. He is a great favourite with every person here, more especially those who are assisting me in his learning. I have got some Latin books for him, and did my funds enable me, I ought to get him several others; but I cannot say my pocket is very weighty. Mrs.

Emmet continues her attention to him; but his time is so much occupied otherwise, that he has very little leisure to be in her company. I have nothing new to inform you of from this abode, where 'silence and solitude dwell.' The prisoners are all in tolerable good health, but mostly in a state of disagreeable suspense, waiting with anxiety for the preparatory notice of liberation. Mrs. Emmet still continues very delicate; the air of this place does not seem to agree with her.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 4th Nov.*, 1801.

"I see you, as well as all our friends in Ireland, are filled with the hopes of an immediate liberation; indeed, most of ourselves entertain the same expectations; but as I never was in the habit of leading you astray by false hopes, so I will not begin now. And I must therefore tell you plainly, that I do not indulge the fond hopes of meeting you soon in our own country. In the first place, I think the peace is nothing, on the part of England, but a manœuvre to keep off the evil day. I don't think she has made peace with any sincere desire to keep it, nor do I think her finances are in such a state as to enable her to stand the dispersion of her commerce, by the competition of other nations. I therefore think it more than probable, that, as soon as the long nights are past, and an immediate terror of invasion over, she will begin to look out for pretexts of renewing the war; and these will not be long wanting. Now this

being the case as I take it, and the minister acting on the idea that the Irish wish to shake off their yoke when the opportunity occurs, will not be hasty in sending away those who might be the most ready to concur in any similar operation. Such is the train of reasoning that leads me to expect no such liberation. I think, however, that as all pretext for keeping us is now taken away, they will be apt to adopt some new measure respecting us, but what it will be I really cannot comprehend; most probably we will be permitted to go somewhere beyond seas; but when, how, or where I am at a loss to guess. I know, for my own part, I will embrace almost any honourable offer to get out of their hands, well knowing a prison is no place to accomplish either public or private purposes. *You will easily see that I could not wish to put Government in possession of my apprehensions on this subject, and of course I am constrained to blink the point as much as I can in my regular correspondence.* In case my fears are founded, and that we must go abroad, I do not apprehend any very great hurry, and of course there will be time to dispose of William as circumstances may direct. Mrs. Emmet is still ready and willing to fulfil her promise respecting him, but even her destination is by no means certain. His expense I cover in this way—we are allowed somewhat more than four glasses (about two-thirds of a pint) of wine every day at dinner; this I save, and sell privately to some of the prisoners, at 3*s.* 6*d.* per bottle, which pays for his diet, having agreed for it at the cheap rate of £15 per annum. The first quarter will be due on the 23rd of this month. I will by that

time have as much due to me as will pay for it. I don't feel the slightest inconvenience from this privation; and though it looks a little awkward to sit at table while others are taking their glass, yet my fellow prisoners cannot but esteem me the more for the motive; indeed I feel a good deal pinched about the usual expenses of mending, washing, paper, quills, &c., &c., *not having, at present, a crown in the world.* But then I do not owe a farthing to any person, and I have learned to make a little go very far. If my liberation were once accomplished, I am not at all afraid of being soon out of these difficulties, provided my health continues. Whenever I turn my eyes to this subject, my feelings are all for you, not for myself.

"I enclose you three letters, which after reading you will seal and send forward by the bearer, Mrs. Risk, who is a lady I was slightly acquainted with in 1798. Her husband fell a victim to his patriotic principles, at that trying period.* It is impossible for me to express in terms sufficiently abhorrent, the feelings respecting the French usurpation, and usurper, to whom I impute nearly all the calamities of my country for the last four years. Nor do I know what to say of such of my unfortunate countrymen, as thought they saw the deliverance of their

* Mrs. Risk, of Sandy Mount, the lady above referred to, was the person to whose house Lord Edward Fitzgerald was to have been removed the night of the day on which he was arrested. This lady's name is found constantly associated with transactions of the United Irishmen, which required the services of an emissary in whose intelligence and fidelity entire confidence could be placed.—R. R. M.

country, connected with a man who had trampled all justice, and all liberty, under foot in his own; their eyes are at length opened, I wish they had been cured at less expense. With such politicians for my *friends*, and with my *enemies* the Orangemen in power, Ireland would have no attractions for me beyond the circle of my own family. A certain gentleman has ceased to have mischief in his power here. Hudson, Chambers, Tennent, and Dowling alone, are on speaking terms with him.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, Nov. 22nd*, 1801.

"I remember, in one of your late letters, you expressed an opinion about *gratitude*, in which you said you differed from a favourite author of mine. The fact is, *truth* and *justice* are the great paramount duties, and every thing that goes to violate either is criminal. It is an old saying that '*we should be just before we are generous.*' As to those, for instance, who have protected my wife and children when thrown destitute on the wide world, I owe them a debt which *justice* commands me to pay whenever I shall have it in my power; and I hope yet to be able to prove to them that their conduct has left a deep and everlasting impression on my mind, an impression of all-commanding *justice*, not of that servile *gratitude* which I have so often seen used as an excuse for base and unworthy acts.

"I know you will be delighted to hear that

William is daily gaining ground in every respect. He is, besides, in excellent health and spirits. He has made such a proficiency with Mr. Cormick on the flute, that he played second at a little concert in Mr. Emmet's room last night, when the party consisted of his musical master, (who is, you know, a young lad,) John Sweetman and their own family, with the addition of Doctor M'Nevin, who is very fond of children; his music, you know, is stolen from his play hours."

TO MRS. N. FROM HER SON.

"*Fort George, 6th Dec.*, 1801.

"My dear mother,

"We had a concert on Friday evening, when Robert Emmet and I played several tunes together; and we had the approbation of the whole company. I am reading Erasmus in Latin, with Doctor Dickson, and I am in the rule of five of fractions, and tare and tret, with Mr. Dowling. My father assists me at every thing. Mrs. Emmet, Mr. Dowdall, &c., send their love to you.

"W. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 13th Dec.*, 1801.

"A King's messenger arrived here two days ago, for the purpose of taking Messrs. Tennent, Simms, Dowdall, Dickson, and Hunter, to Dublin, where they are to be liberated on bail. We are as yet totally ignorant as to the intentions of Government respecting the others. As to myself, I am perfectly

prepared for any event, being fully convinced that a superintending Providence orders all things for the best, however contrary, apparently, to our notions of their advantage or disadvantage to us for the time.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 25th Dec.*, 1801.

"I am extremely happy to inform you, that William slept perfectly well last night, and is this morning, I may say, *well*. It is not easy for me to tell you how much anxiety this illness of his occasioned in the prison, nor how much I am obliged to all the prisoners for their attention. To the ladies we owe the greatest obligations. From Jane Park, and Mrs. Cuthbert, who brought him here, attention of every kind was to be expected, and was fully evinced; but Mrs. Emmet's kindness went beyond what could possibly be expected. Fruits, sweetmeats, jellies, everything she could think of, were sent; and her own personal attendance and advice were superadded.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 30th Dec.*, 1801.

"The long-expected letter has this moment arrived from the captain of the ship of war, stating his arrival at Greenock, and his being ready to receive the State prisoners. They (that is, the five) will of course set off, as I suppose, to-morrow morning, for Greenock, from whence they will be conveyed to

Dublin. As to the remainder of us, nothing new has turned up; but from all I see and hear, I think we will be permitted to go abroad very soon.

"John Sweetman intends to accompany the travellers as far as Greenock, from whence he will proceed by Belfast to Dublin; so that you may expect to see him in a few days after you receive this. He will inform you, verbally, of our situation and expectations. The prisoners are all well, and Mrs. Emmet continues pretty stout. She desires her best respects to you.

"S. N."

CHAPTER XIX.

TO MRS. N.

"1*st Jan.*, 1802.

"This will be handed to you by our dear friend, John Sweetman, who, I hope, will spend a day with you. I have nothing new to say to you; my views and expectations are precisely the same as when I wrote to you by Mrs. Risk. I therefore implore you not to indulge in any hope of seeing me in Ireland at present, nor allow yourself to be carried away by any foolish rumours of the day. You seem to forget that *my* political conduct is out of the range of forgiveness, and I am by no means sorry that it is so. Notwithstanding the darkness of our prospect at present, I look to the liberation of my country with as much confidence as I ever did.

"S. N."

TO HIS DAUGHTER, A. N. (AT MRS. BOND'S.)

"All the gentlemen who are now liberated are known to you, except the bearer, Mr. Dowdall, who I wish to introduce to your acquaintance. He is already known to Mrs. B.; but I wish you ever to

consider him as one of the best beloved of your father's friends.

"S. N."

TO HIS SISTERS, FROM W. N.

"*Fort George*, 10*th Jan.*, 1802.

"My dear sisters,

"I suppose you have heard that I was sick: but I am sure you will be happy to hear that I am perfectly recovered. When I was ill, my little pigeon used to play about me like my little cat; it is very fond of me. Dr. Dickson, who was so kind as to teach me Latin, has left us; but Mr. Dowling is good enough to supply his place, and to continue my arithmetic also. I can play now twenty-one tunes on the flute, and Mr. Cormick gives me those which will be most agreeable to my mother. I have just begun trigonometry with Mr. Russell. I read history and biography in English with Mr. Emmet. With my father, geography, and a little of everything, except writing, which he thinks will be best deferred for some time. Robert Emmet is my school-fellow, in all classes. Give my duty to my mother.

"I am, your affectionate brother,

"W. N."

TO HIS DAUGHTER, A. N.

"*Fort George, January* 10*th*, 1802.

"We have had no farther accounts respecting ourselves; but we expect that some measure of liberation will take place when the definitive treaty of peace shall be signed; and that event may be looked

for very shortly, if we are to credit the newspapers. After a separation of *sixty-four months* from my home and my family, a return to it would no doubt afford me exquisite pleasure; but if that happiness should be denied me, and should your mother, sisters, and yourself be still doomed to suffer for the alleged offences of your father, we must endure it not only with patience but with fortitude.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, January* 17*th*, 1802.

"My dear mother,

"We have had a good deal of frost and snow these two months past. I got fine little slides while the frost continued. Mr. Simms, he and I used to play tig. I kept a weekly account of the clothes sent for washing, and when they come in, I see if they are right. On Sunday, I dine sometimes in Mrs. M'Gregor's, the lady who gives the gentlemen their diet; it was from her son that I got the little pigeon. My father and I are very snug here; we sometimes play shinney together.

"W. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, February 2nd*, 1802.

"I was extremely happy to learn that the prisoners in Carrickfergus have been liberated; if you see Mr. Teeling or Mr. Faloon, remember me to them. Give my best regards also to my late fellow-prisoners. I trust R. S. has brought his brother and you together, before this reaches you. This is a

business I have had much at heart. At any rate, I earnestly entreat you to cultivate an intimacy with R. S. He has an honest heart, and a sincere regard for every creature belonging to our family. Indeed, I cannot say less of W. S.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George*, 14*th Feb.*, 1802.

"William's education goes on to my entire satisfaction; indeed, I can hardly say in what branch he does not excel. I count more upon his increasing rectitude of mind, and the maturing principles of morality, than all the rest. So you may guess how much he tends to alleviate my confinement. His daily course comprises figures, with Mr. Dowling; general history, with Mr. Emmet; Latin, with Mr. D.; music, with Mr. Cormick; mathematics, with Mr. Russell; grammar, geography, and examination upon history, with me.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, Sunday Morning.*

"I have nothing now to tell you respecting ourselves, only that as Mrs. Emmet's lying-in draws so nigh, that she would not be able to travel in case of a removal. Mr. E. made an application for leave to stay with her until her recovery, should such removal take place in the course of next month; and he has yesterday received an answer, 'that he would be permitted to stay, *should such an event take place*;'

which, you see is, in fact, saying nothing as to our destiny.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 2nd May,* 1802.

"There was a letter to-day from Sir R. Ford to a prisoner here, stating that we would be *very soon* disposed of. In that case, I will expect to see you shortly. William is well, and doing well. Mrs. Emmet is perfectly recovered. The child well.*

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George, 9th May,* 1802.

"As to our liberation, everything remains in the same state of agonising uncertainty. Definitive ratifications, exchanges, proclamations, have all been consummated,—the public force disbanded, in a great measure; but Fort George, and its solitary inhabitants, placed as we are on this outskirt of the world, seem to be once more forgotten. I should, however, have made an ill use of my five years and three-quarters' imprisonment, if I were not able to endure even this tantalizing *suspense.*

"I trust, my dear, that you and our sweet little ones will be able to persevere in that tranquillity of mind which has already borne you through so many trying situations; and that you will ever bear in mind, that our re-union *must* take place in God's own good time, and that it *cannot* take place till that time.

* A girl, named Jane Erin Emmet.

"Mrs. Emmet is perfectly recovered; her little one is thriving extremely well; they took the air in a carriage on Thursday last, and she walks out a little almost every day. Mr. Russell and several of your friends here desire to be affectionately remembered to you.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"16*th May*, 1802.

"William is perfectly well, and growing a big, strong, coarse fellow. I don't think I ever saw a stouter, or more active boy of his age. To-morrow he will be nine years old, and he is just four feet one inch high. As to his education, I need say no more than that he goes on as usual. As to myself, I am perfectly recovered in every respect, and enjoy, at present, as good health as I ever did in my life; my exercise, appetite, and sleep, keep pace with each other, and are all good.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Monday Morning*, 31*st May*, 1802.

"At length we know our destiny! A pardon is now making out, and we are to be sent immediately to *Hamburgh*. We have received this intelligence (which we know to be authentic) by this morning's post. This destination has not a little nonplussed us, for I believe there is not one among us that means to reside in that country. *Liberty*, however, at any rate, is sweet. As to myself, you know my immedi-

ate object is America, but I certainly will find myself no little hampered as to outfit there, and means of conveyance, but my principal embarrassment is about William. He can't bear the idea of parting with me, and has been in tears this hour past, because I won't *promise* to take him with me. I am indeed a good deal divided in my own opinion on the subject. I see much to say on both sides of the question, and therefore I leave it entirely to you to decide. I could fill this sheet with reasons pro and con, exclusive of my own as well as his feelings; but under all the circumstances, I feel that I owe it to you to leave this matter to you to decide, and by that decision I will abide. We have it in contemplation to make an application, in order to get the destination of the ship changed, and if possible to touch at Ireland, in order to see our families, and afterwards proceed to Bourdeaux and America, some of us wishing to go to France, and others to America; whether we may succeed or not, I cannot say."

TO HIS DAUGHTER, S. N.

"*Fort George, 5th June*, 1802.

"This will probably be the last time I shall have the pleasure of writing to you, while I remain in Europe; and though the letter is directed to you, I mean it equally for all.

"I do not mean to write you a long letter of instruction, because you will find your duty pointed out to you in your Bible, which I desire you to read and meditate upon carefully; and because the Almighty has

blessed you with the best of mothers, whose example will be a model for your imitation. She will convince you that there is no real happiness, but that which arises from a conscientious discharge of our duty towards God and man; she will teach you that all worldly wealth or grandeur are nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit; and above all, she will impress upon you the necessity of 'remembering your Creator in the days of your youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when you shall have no pleasure in them.'

"Your mother will tell you where I am going, and what are my objects; I hope our separation will not be of long duration; and when our meeting, by the blessing of Divine Providence, shall take place, how much will my happiness be crowned by learning that all my little darlings have made goodness and virtue the pursuit of their lives. I send William back to you, because I think your mother would wish it, and because I think he will be a comfort (and soon a protection) to you all. May I not be disappointed in my fond hopes respecting you! And may the Father of all mercies frame your hearts, so as that you may *love one another!*

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Fort George*, 13*th June*, 1802.

"My dear,

"I received, on Thursday last, your very affectionate and sensible letter of the 6th. You will see I had anticipated all your wishes respecting Wil-

liam, who I hope is now safe and happy with you. I was well pleased to find that you bow to this new and unexpected dispensation with your accustomed fortitude. I know that fortitude well, and I reckoned much upon it; but I confess I was more or less apprehensive that it might have been somewhat broken down by the perpetual din of the *dreamers* who surround you.

" I am, then, to inform you that the vessel which is to carry us to the Elbe, has arrived yesterday evening, and is now at anchor under our guns. She is called the *Ariadne*, a twenty-gun frigate. Her captain (Campbell), who is a native of this place, bears a most excellent character. He has evinced himself to be a man of undaunted courage, and from that alone, one may conclude that he is a man of humanity: so that we have a prospect of a pleasant voyage. Mrs. Emmet and all her children, as I suspected, go with us, and we only wait the arrival of a messenger, who is hourly expected, in order to take our departure for Germany.

" I wrote to R. Simms on the 2nd, and was rather disappointed at not hearing from him yesterday or to-day. I will, however, expect a letter from him, or some other of my friends, on my arrival at Hamburgh, which will be *necessary* for my intended passage to America. Of one thing you and my friends may rest satisfied, that whatever credit I may get will be used sparingly; the most rigid economy being what I conceive a *moral duty* to every one, in my situation especially: nay, if I could *work* my passage to the

new world I would *prefer* it to the thoughts of being burthensome to any one.

"In the mean time, I have reason to be thankful that my health is very good, and that my faculties are by no means injured by my long confinement; and whatever I may have lost in ardour, I have, I trust, acquired in maturity of judgment. To my imprisonment I owe the full *conviction* that all human wisdom is *folly* and *vanity*, and that there is no happiness but in *virtue;* no rest, but in the *grave.*

"The opinions which I hold, and the principles for which I have suffered, are at present out of vogue and unfashionable; and many, I know, will despair of their success. If they are *wrong*, they should not succeed; and if they are *right*, they must and will succeed; for it is *God* who rules the world. Remember me in the most affectionate manner to my mother and sisters, to your father and mother, and in general to all my friends and relations. Give my love to my children. May the Almighty bless and preserve you all, is the hourly prayer of

"Your ever affectionate

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*On board the Ariadne, off Cuxhaven, 4th July*, 1802.

"Though we are not yet landed, our passage is considered as at an end, and we will in all probability breakfast in Cuxhaven to-morrow morning. We sailed from Fort George at half-past one, on Wednesday the 30th ult., and have had a quick, but rough passage. We were transmitted to the frigate by the Governor with the utmost politeness, and we have been received and treated on board her with every marked civility; nor is it easy to say whether officers or men were most desirous to render our situation on board comfortable; the former from politeness, the latter from *feeling*. I am in hopes of remaining at Cuxhaven until a vessel (to be engaged by my friends who go up to Hamburgh) shall call for me, and in this intention, I am much actuated by a hatred of *show* and expense.

"Nine o'clock.—We have just cast anchor opposite Cuxhaven, at the distance of about one mile; from what I now learn, I think it probable that I will go along with the rest up to Hamburgh (distant fifty miles) in the morning. Wind and flood tide appear as if they would favour us."

TO MRS. N.

"*Cuxhaven, 5th August,* 1802.

"After staying in Hamburgh and Altona for nearly a month, waiting a passage for America direct, in vain, *I have been obliged to take one by a circuitous route,** and embarked accordingly at the latter place on Friday last, and have ever since been tossed in the Elbe by contrary winds, so as to take five days and a half to accomplish that which we did in less than seven hours going up. So much for the uncertainty of the seas! and, to add to all, I was dreadfully sea-sick the whole time. There were several vessels for the Northern and New England States here; on board one of which Mr. Cuthbert and family, together with Mr. Cumming, took their passage for Portsmouth, at about £75 for the whole. I left the before-mentioned family (the Cuthberts) in Hamburgh, together with J. Sweetman, M. Dowling, and S. E. Hudson; Doctor M'Nevin had departed for Dresden; A. O'Connor and J. Chambers had gone by land for Holland; Emmet's family, together with Russell, Sweeny, Cormick, and Wilson, had sailed two days before me for Holland. So, you see, we have all taken our respective destinations, and are completely scattered.

"S. N."

* From this ambiguous expression, Mrs. Neilson inferred his intention to revisit Ireland.—R. R. M.

TO MRS. N.

"*Off Heligoland, 6th August*, 1802.

"I avail myself of the pilot's going ashore to tell you that we got under weigh from Cuxhaven this morning at five o'clock, with a fair wind. We are now distant from Hamburgh 110 miles, and I trust by this time to-morrow we shall be twice that distance, and more. I dreamt last night that my dear William was ill. "S. N."

TO MRS. N.

(No date; written in Dublin, after his return from Belfast, some time in October, 1802.)

"I made my way up by day and night, through rain and all, and even at the expense of setting up one of our horses, in order to arrive in time; when, behold, I have been detained here (I need not tell you in what state of uneasiness) until this day. Every second day the ship was to sail, and when the second day came, still the sailing was as uncertain as ever. During this vexatious delay it occasioned no little grief to me that I had been induced to leave home so hastily and prematurely. It was not a small consolation to me, however, that during this painful sojourn I was hospitably protected, and had almost every opportunity I wished to vindicate my character from the foul aspersions which had been cast upon it behind my back. Ann can tell you but a small part of the kindness that was testified to me, when with her; and many, I may say all, of our old friends here who had been abused (by false reports) would give you a very different reception now than they would

have done these four years past, should you think it right to visit this place.

"I dare not name to you the different proofs of continued or renewed friendship I have experienced in this place; those who had slackened renewed their confidence in me; for it was my constant avowal that I would (even under all risks to myself) meet any man who had any even the slightest charge to bring against me; and if none such lived in Ireland at present, those who were abroad did not run a less risk than I did in venturing into the country; and with respect to any of *them* who might pretend to have any thing to say against me, I only wished a suspension of opinion until we could meet face to face. Upon the whole, except upon the score of my *private* feelings, I do not regret my delay now that it has terminated.

"I was, for some days after my return, very poorly; the perpetual night riding and anxiety of mind had injured my health; but I assure you, I am now going on board, as well as I have been for a long time. I regret extremely that I cannot name to you the variety of persons to whom I owe even more than our usual national hospitality. They risked, you know, every thing in harbouring me.

"S. N."

TO MRS. NEILSON.

"*New York, 8th Dec.*, 1802.

"Since my arrival I have not had an entire day of health. I have met here much kindness; and though mostly confined, I have my little pamphlet published.

It is meeting a rapid sale, and will be re-printed, as I understand, in Philadelphia. I send you some papers and my pamphlet, and would write you at length, if I was able. I hope I shall do so in a few days. I wait with anxiety for the arrival of the *Edward* at Philadelphia. My affectionate love to the children, my mother, your father, and all friends. Ever and unalterably yours,

"S. N."

TO MRS. NEILSON.

"*New York*, 1*st Jan.*, 1803.

"I am happy to tell you that I am recovering daily: I am not, however, strong enough nor well enough informed yet to write to my friends in such a satisfactory manner as I could wish. I am still hesitating about Charlestown, and I am all anxiety for letters from Ireland. In the meantime I expend, I may say, *no money*, while I am daily acquiring useful information. Since I wrote you last, I have had a very pressing invitation to commence a newspaper here, and very warm promises of support. I have declined giving an answer, both on account of my delicate health and my incapacity still of judging of the true state of parties and of the country.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*Pecksgill*, 70 *miles up Hudson's River*, 4*th Feb.*, 1803.

"I am spending a few days here with Mr. Owens, who was so kind as to invite me warmly; and my physicians, one and all, thought it very advisable for

me to accept the invitation, on account of my health. I have been more and more pressed to commence a newspaper, and I have had very flattering encouragement indeed. If I recover *perfectly*, I will undertake it at all risks; for there appears to me a vacancy for such an undertaking: nor do I mean to lose much more time; so that if a favourable opportunity offers, I would much wish for William, in the first instance; we can be immediately useful to each other; and as soon as I set all a going, I will, either *personally* or otherwise, take means to bring you and the children over, but I don't wish to do so until I get every thing ready for your comfortable accommodation.

"S. N."

TO MRS. N.

"*New York, 5th May,* 1803.

"I have been to Philadelphia to consult several friends, particularly William Kean, about the best means to start with success. Upon the whole, after consulting Dr. White by letter, and J. Caldwell personally, (who is now married to a Miss Higginbottom,) as well as all my other friends within reach, I have determined to commence an evening paper *here.* I hope you have sent William out with Mr. M'Niece: his utility will be of the utmost importance both to me and himself, as well as to you. It would appear that the Almighty, in general, only *changes* our afflictions; for although I now write without pain, I am obliged to hold my eyes within three or four inches of the paper, on account of the dimness of my sight.

"S. N."

TO HIS SON.

"*New York*, 19*th May*, 1803.

"My dear William,

"I write you on chance, because I have hopes that you are now on your passage to this place. I have been perfectly delighted by yours of the 21st of March, especially when you state your particular attention to your mother and sisters: they are every way deserving of duty and affection, and my ardent desire is that you should not fail in either. Should this letter reach you before your departure for this place, give my affectionate regards to all your sisters, to your cousins and all other friends, especially your grandfather and grandmother, by no means forgetting your aunts. I wrote two letters to your mother this morning, both in some haste, as I expected the vessel to sail very quickly; the wind has however prevented her as yet. Make my apology to the children for not writing to them, and I am sure they will excuse me when they know that this scrawl has cost me nearly an hour, and that in *torture*, owing to a terrible rheumatism.

"Your affectionate father,

"Samuel Neilson."

(This was the last letter written by Neilson.)

CHAPTER XX.

The preceding letters and narratives, give ample details of the imprisonment of the leaders of the United Irishmen, of their ultimate liberation, and arrival in Holland. There is one circumstance connected with their confinement in the spring of 1798, which is not referred to in those papers, but which deserves attention, as an illustration of that fell spirit of Orangeism, by which not only the rabble of that society, but the members of the aristocracy who belonged to it, were animated.

"On the 24th of March, the day after the breaking out of the insurrection, one of the most atrocious propositions that ever was addressed to a legislative body even to the Irish parliament, was made by the late Lord Farnham, (celebrated for his pious zeal in the "dodge" of a later day, called "the second reformation,") then Colonel Maxwell. It would be well for the people of England to make themselves acquainted with the characters and dispositions of those sanctimonious gentlemen, who take on themselves the protection and support of the interests of true religion in the sister country. On

the occasion above mentioned, the gallant colonel and future saint, said:—'The principal fomenters and leaders of the rebellion were in prison, and as the project of vesting confidentially an absolute authority in the executive, was for the purpose of crushing rebellion as speedily as possible, and insuring the security of the State, *he would submit to the wisdom of the house, whether it would not be right and necessary that military executions should have retrospect to those persons that were then confined, and that they should be disposed of as expeditiously as possible*, in order that the rebels who looked up to them as leaders might no longer derive any encouragement from the expectation of rescuing them at a future day from their captivity.' Lord Castlereagh most earnestly besought gentlemen that they would not suffer the zeal and warmth of their feelings on this occasion to run away with their good sense; that they would not proceed to that which would be unconstitutional indeed; but above all, he conjured them not to press a measure upon his Excellency which must brand his administration with the imputation of cruelty, and sink it to the same degraded and sanguinary level with that government, which sought to destroy the happiest constitution. For Heaven's sake, let not gentlemen press a general and indiscriminating system of unnecessary vengeance, nor call upon his Excellency to violate the great duty of the executive, that of administering justice in mercy."*

* Report of Debates in Irish Commons, March, 1798.

The compact between the United Irish leaders and the Government was entered into about the middle of the month of July, 1798. The terms on which Government agreed to spare the life of Bond, to relinquish prosecutions, and to permit the persons who had signed that agreement to expatriate themselves to a country at peace with his Majesty, had been completely and satisfactorily fulfilled by the prisoners in the early part of the month following. The memoir of Emmet, O'Connor, and Macneven, was no sooner delivered in, (on the 4th of August,) giving a detailed account of the origin, objects, and progress of the conspiracy, and their examination gone through before the Privy Council, than Lord Cornwallis authenticated the fulfilment of the compact on their part by two acts of his in relation to their disclosures. He sent Mr. Dobbs, accompanied by certain popular leaders of the United Irishmen, prevailed on to undertake this mission by the state prisoners, with passes and safe conduct into the county Wicklow, where the insurgents were still in arms, to make known the compact and recommend submission. In the other instance, we find by the *Belfast Newsletter* of 31st of August, 1798, that General Nugent, then commanding the northern district, had been apprised of the compact and ordered to act on it, and he accordingly published a notice to the people of Ulster, in the paper referred to, calling on the people to submit and avail themselves of the benefit of the terms set forth in the Lord Lieutenant's proclamation, and announcing to them "the compact entered into with the state prisoners

O'Connor, Emmet, Neilson, Jackson, and seventy others." Before the Amnesty Act had become the law of the land, or the compact with the state prisoners had been entered into, Lord Cornwallis, about three weeks after his arrival in Ireland, had issued a proclamation authorizing the generals commanding in the different districts to grant protection to persons returning to their duty, surrendering arms, and taking the oath of allegiance. It was dated the 29th June, 1798, but was not published in the *Gazette* till the 3rd of July. Special care, however, was taken to neutralize the beneficial effects that might have been expected from the fair construction that might have been put on the terms of this proclamation, by transmitting along with this *public* document, a circular letter addressed to the generals of the respective district (*without* publicity) which could not fail to frustrate the avowed intentions of the former.

CIRCULAR.

"*Dublin Castle, July 2nd,* 1798.

"SIR,

"I inclose to you the form of a proclamation, which, according to your discretion, you will have filled up and sent among the rebel bodies assembled in your district. This proclamation you will see invites the deluded to desert their leaders, and, of course, *excludes those leaders from pardon.*

"You will take care to have the lists descriptive of the persons to whom you grant certificates transmitted

from time to time to me, with such observations as shall occur.

"I am to desire you will send me the names of those persons who are the reputed leaders of the rebel bodies, and who, *of course, are excepted from the offer of pardon*, as it may be advisable *to specifically proclaim them, and possibly to offer rewards for their being apprehended.*

"N.B.—You will cause the townland and barony in which the persons reside, to whom you grant certificates, to be inserted in your certificate."

"*In the Irish House of Commons, Tuesday, July 17th.*

"The Right Hon. Lord Castlereagh presented to the House the following message from his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, which he read in his place as follows:

"'Cornwallis.—I have received the King's commands to acquaint the House of Commons that his Majesty, notwithstanding his just abhorrence of the unnatural and unprovoked rebellion which has broken out in this kingdom, yet being ever disposed to exert, as far as possible, his royal prerogative of mercy, and to receive again under his royal protection those who, by the arts of wicked and designing men, have been seduced from their allegiance, has signified his gracious intention of granting his general and free pardon for all offences committed on or before a certain day, upon such conditions and with such exceptions as may be compatible with the public safety; for carrying which benevolent purpose into execution, his Majesty has signified his gracious intention of sanctioning, in

the usual form, by his royal signature, a bill for that purpose, previous to its being submitted for the concurrence of Parliament.'"—*Lords' Journals, vol.* 8, *p.* 116.

The amnesty announced on the 17th July was nominally in operation from that date; but the bill brought into Parliament to the same effect, did not pass through all its stages till the 6th of October. In substance, it accorded his Majesty's pardon for all acts of treason and sedition committed up to the 22nd of August, 1798, upon condition of banishment, or such terms as his Majesty might think fit to impose; excepting from the benefit of it all persons guilty of the crime of murder; all persons who had been in custody between the 1st of January, 1795, and the passing of the said act, under any charge of treason or suspicion of treason; all persons who had held commissions or been engaged in his Majesty's service, and had joined in the rebellion; all persons concerned in or consenting to any design for procuring the invasion of the realm; all members of treasonable committees called National, Executive, Provincial, or County Committees of United Irishmen; all persons who had acted as generals, adjutant-generals, colonels, lieutenant-colonels, majors, or captains in the rebel forces; all persons in anywise concerned in the rebellion, who should not deliver up their arms in such manner as appointed by the chief Governor; all persons attainted of high treason, during the present session of Parliament; all persons convicted by court-martial since the 24th of May, 1798, of rebellious practices; and also thirty-two persons named

therein, fugitives from justice, charged with treason.* The ten classes of persons excepted from the operation of the Amnesty Act, comprise, in point of fact, the great mass of the people, who had been involved in the guilt of rebellion. The whole of the leaders are clearly debarred from its benefit. But every man, whether leader or follower, who had taken the oath of fidelity to the Union, the avowed object of which was revolution, the means of accomplishing it—foreign assistance, had obviously and evidently consented to "procuring the invasion of the realm," and was, consequently, not legally entitled to pardon. But though it were not intended the law should be enforced against the latter, and the remedial statute with regard to that class was meant to be liberally construed, another class was excepted, which completely frustrated the avowed intention of the act with regard to a very large portion of the Society, namely, the shopkeepers, the small farmers, tradesmen, and persons in the middle ranks. The grand object of the founders of the Society was, by its organization, to establish a universal representation—to assign to every member a certain rank in a committee, and to render him eligible to any office in any grade of the system for which his activity and devotion to it might qualify him. Now two of the treasonable committees excepted from the benefit of this act, included in their numbers the very class whose numbers comprised so large a portion of the strength of the Union, namely, the middle ranks above referred to. The baronial com-

* Irish Statutes at Large, vol. 18, page 1054.

mittees are not excepted, it is true; but it is only necessary to read the informations of Maguan, Hughes, and Newell, to perceive that persons in the middle ranks took leading parts in the county committees, and that military titles, such as those of captain, &c., were conferred even on persons among the working classes.

Whether United Irishmen were members of a baronial, or of a county committee, it then mattered little to their security, so long as the proof of belonging to either depended on the testimony of the reckless miscreants who were the arbiters of life and death in those days.

In the guilt of belonging to either, there was no difference which justified the distinction made between the two committees. If mercy was the guiding motive which dictated the terms of this amnesty, it would have been doubly blessed both to the giver and the object of it, had the spirit and the letter of the law been in accordance with its professed intention. If its object was to put the people once more in the King's peace—to quiet their apprehensions, and to secure them from the exercise of that rigour of the local terrorists which went beyond the law; the first aim of any remedial enactment to effect this purpose would have been to remove every facility which their enemies might have to keep alive the popular disquiet, and the general feeling of insecurity from the malignant enmity of Orangeism. The delusive amnesty, however, set out with proclaiming pardon, and terminated with an array of exceptions, which virtually amounted to a nullification of the act of grace solemnly set forth in the preamble.

There were many things done in the rebellion, by both parties, that violated the laws of humanity as well as justice; but it seems to me that of all the treasons committed by either party (for there was treason in this fearful struggle against the people, we are told by Mr. Grattan, even of a worse kind than that against the Government), the treachery displayed all throughout the proceedings of the Irish administration, connected with and consequent upon the compact they had entered into with the leaders of the rebellion, was the most signally flagitious.

The same policy which was intended to defeat the proposed object of this amnesty, by multiplying exceptions to its operation, which deprived the people of all security, and afforded their enemies such numerous facilities of applying those exceptions to their cases, was invariably pursued throughout the rebellion, and had been acted on previously to its outbreak.

In a proclamation of Lord Camden, dated 17th of May, 1797, wherein the employment of military force for the suppression of all tumultuous and traitorous assemblies is enjoined, all persons engaged therein, and in treasonable societies, are called on to surrender before a specified day, and "His Majesty's gracious pardon" is promised to all such persons, with the following exceptions: "Save and except all such as have been guilty of murder; conspiracy to murder; burglary; burning of houses, corn, or hay, stacks of straw or turf; maliciously digging up or injuring or destroying any potatoes, flax or hemp, rape or corn, of any kind, planted or sowed; or destroying mea-

dows or hay; maiming or houghing of cattle; administering or causing to be administered any unlawful oath or engagement to any of His Majesty's forces, of any description; *or inciting or encouraging to commit any of the aforesaid offences respectively, and save and except all persons now in custody.*"*

The last paragraph left the people as much at the mercy of the despots of their several districts, and the rural staff of spies and informers of each, as they had been before. During the progress of the rebellion there was no deviation from the same policy. Before the surrender of Wexford, Captain Keughe, on the part of the people in possession of the town, sent the following proposal to General Lake:—

"That Captain M'Manus shall proceed from Wexford towards Oulart, accompanied by Mr. E. Hay, appointed by the inhabitants, of all religious persuasions, to inform the officer commanding the King's troops, that they are ready to deliver up the town of Wexford without opposition, lay down their arms, and to return to their allegiance, provided that their persons and properties are guaranteed by the commanding officer, and that they will use every influence in their power to induce the people of the country at large to submit," &c.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL LAKE'S ANSWER TO MR. KEUGHE'S PROPOSAL.

"Lieutenant-General Lake cannot attend to any terms offered by rebels in arms against their Sove-

* Appendix to Report of Lords' Committee of Secrecy, 1797, No. 10.

reign; while they continue so, he must use the force intrusted to him, with the utmost energy, for their destruction.

"To the deluded multitude he promises pardon, *on their delivering into his hands their leaders*, surrendering their arms, and returning with sincerity to their allegiance.

(Signed) "G. LAKE.

"*Enniscorthy, 22nd June*, 1798."

On the defeat and surrender of the French at Ballinamuck, a vast number of the deluded people who attached themselves to the former were put to death, many in the field, and some who were taken prisoners were tried and executed on the spot, whilst those who fled, wherever met with by the military, were put to the sword.

The Lord Lieutenant on the 11th of September published a proclamation, but whether the want of knowledge of the grace offered, or the inability to comply with the terms of delivering up a French firelock, was the cause, it produced but little effect:—

"By the Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of Ireland.

"A Proclamation.

"CORNWALLIS.

"Whereas, it appears that during the late invasion, many of the inhabitants of the county of Mayo, and counties adjacent, did join the French forces, and did receive from them arms and ammunition; and whereas it may be expedient to admit

such persons to mercy who may have been instigated thereto by designing men, we do hereby promise his Majesty's pardon to any person who has joined the enemy, provided he surrenders himself to any of his Majesty's justices of the peace, or to any of his Majesty's officers, *and delivers up a French firelock and bayonet*, and all the ammunition in his possession; *and provided he has not served in any higher capacity than that of private.*

"This proclamation to be in force for thirty days from the date hereof.

"Given at his Majesty's castle of Dublin, this 11th day of September, 1798.

"By the Lord Lieutenant's commands,

"CASTLEREAGH."

It would be a waste of words to make a comment on this document. But while every act of the Legislature, or ordinance of the Irish Government, that was framed with the avowed object of reclaiming the disaffected, and of affording pardon and protection to the penitent, was so worded as to leave ample field for the furious zeal of Orangeism to exercise its ingenuity in the restriction of its remedial character, there were no loop holes left in the acts of indemnity which protected their opponents from any claims the former might venture to put forward for redress.

Lord Carhampton's wholesale transportation of the peasantry in the latter part of 1796, and the spring of the following year, without the ordinary intervention of the functions of the magistracy or the judicial authorities, rendered it necessary to pass an act of

indemnity in the latter year for "the divers acts done not justifiable by law," since the 1st day of January, 1797.*

The summary proceedings of Lord Lake, and of his civil coadjutors in the commission of the peace, especially in the county of Wexford, made a new act of indemnity necessary for the more effectual protection of those persons. This new act went through its final stage the 6th of October, 1798: it provided that all persons, justices of the peace and others, who had apprehended criminals and other persons suspected of assisting and aiding in insurrections, riots, and tumults, or who "had seized arms and entered in the houses and possessions of several persons, and done divers acts not justifiable by law, but which were yet so much for the public service," should be held indemnified for all such acts done since the 3rd of July, 1797, and all prosecutions for the same were to be discharged and made void, and where the plaintiff was nonsuited to pay double costs to the defendant.†

It is not possible to read the preceding details and come to the conclusion that the measures referred to were such as were honestly believed to be best calculated to gain the confidence of the people, and to put an end speedily to the designs of the disaffected. A protracted state of preparation for insurrection for some object (which no results ever can justify) was allowed to drag on its existence for upwards of six years. To Lord Fitzwilliam's recall and Lord Camden's

* Irish Statutes at Large, 1797, p. 443.

† Ibid, vol. xviii. p. 791.

government, the rebellion of 1798 is to be attributed. Such of the leading men of the United Irish Societies as were from the beginning bent on separation, would never have been able to have maintained their influence, and extended their views throughout the country, had the government of Lord Fitzwilliam subsisted long enough for the measures that might have been expected from it to have been carried into effect. Had such a resolution been proposed to the Leinster Societies in the year 1795, expressive of a determination to disregard any measure of the Parliament for a redress of grievances, as was passed by the provincial committee at Bond's in 1798, it would not have been carried, nor even entertained.

The above named resolution, which was produced in evidence against Bond, was one of the papers found on the table at which the members of the provincial meeting committee were sitting the 12th of March, 1798. It has been frequently referred to as a proof of the inutility of any efforts that might be made on the part of Government to conciliate the people engaged in this conspiracy.

The date of the Society's adoption of this resolution is overlooked, however, and the exasperation consequent on the extreme rigour of Government,—the recurrence to the free quarter system, and the delegation of the powers and functions of civil government to an intolerant and sanguinary faction, is conveniently kept out of sight.

The resolution of the 12th of March is to the following effect:—

"Resolved, that we will pay no attention whatever

to any attempt that may be made by either House of Parliament to divert the public mind from the grand object we have in view, as nothing short of the complete emancipation of our country will satisfy us."*

* Ridgway's Report, Bond's Trial, p. 217.

CHAPTER XXI.

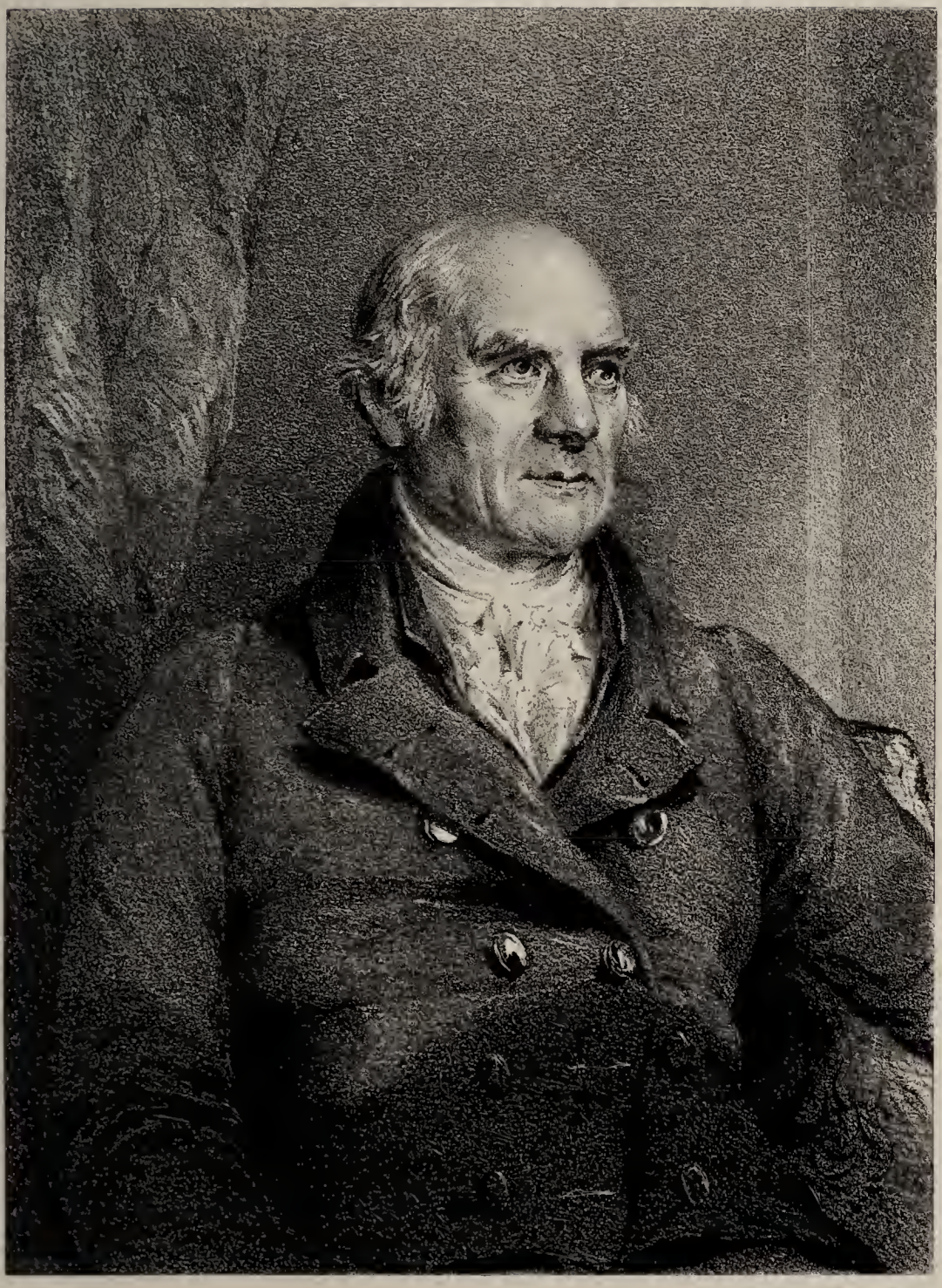
Neilson's condition, on his arrival in Holland, in the latter part of June, 1802, (after a confinement of upwards of four years on the last occasion, and a year and a half on the former,) was any thing but encouraging. His constitution was impaired by his long sufferings; his property completely ruined: and in this state he found himself, in a foreign land, without the means of future support, or for the removal of his family to his final destination, the United States. If Neilson had been a traitor to his cause or to his friends, his penury would hardly have been such as to compel him to part with the boy who had been, for the preceding ten months, his companion in Fort George, in whom his heart seems to have been wound up, if we may judge of the ardour of his affection, and the pride he took in him, by every letter of his, in which he makes mention of the boy. His friends in Belfast were applied to by him on his arrival in Holland, and by their assistance he was finally enabled to complete his preparations for proceeding to America. Hamilton Rowan, at the period of the arrival of the state prisoners in Holland, was living

at Altona with his family, and on their arrival in Hamburgh he wrote to them, "offering them such services as he was capable of rendering them in that country;" and he speaks of "having had a long and sincere regard for Samuel Neilson, and the strongest conviction of his patriotism and integrity." Neilson, in acknowledging a letter of Mr. Rowan's, of the 9th of July, alludes to his future plans and prospects, and the principles which he set out in political life with advocating, and continued to entertain with unabated ardour.

"In the new world," he says, "I hope to find *the people* as I ever found them at home, honest and sincere. I am not afraid of pushing my way among a people who I may say sprung from ourselves. In the propagation of truth I know there is nothing but pain and trouble, and he who embarks in that cause with any other view, will, I am confident, find himself mistaken. You, I know, are delicately situated; but the purity of your views and the integrity of your heart, lead me to speak to you with confidence; at the same time that I wish, of all things, to avoid the most remote possibility of implicating you.

"Neither the eight years' hardship I have endured —the total destruction of my property—the forlorn state of my wife and children—the momentary failure of our national exertions—nor the still more distressing usurpation in France, have abated my ardour in the cause of my country and of general liberty. You and I, my dear friend, will pass away, but *truth* will remain.

"S. N."



The letter from which this extract is taken is dated Altona, the 12th July, 1802.

Towards the latter part of July, Neilson formed the resolution of returning to Ireland, for the purpose of visiting his family and his friends, previously to his embarkation for America.

This rash project, which put his liberty and his life once more in jeopardy, was carried into execution with his accustomed determination, and want of due consideration of the consequences that might be apprehended from it.

It is difficult to conceive any advantage or gratification that might arise from his return, that could compensate for the dangers of such a proceeding.

The probability is, that the principal object he had in view was to have an opportunity of clearing his character from the calumnies which had been circulated against him, immediately after the compact with the Government had been entered into. These calumnies he refers to in his letters.

In the pamphlet, of which mention has been made at the beginning of this Memoir, published in 1804, at New York, giving an account of the life of Neilson, by one of his friends, I find the following passage:—"He was charged with ambition; he was stigmatized as a traitor: but in all this how did his case differ from that of Hampden or Sydney?"

One of the Wicklow prisoners, Felix Rourke, then confined in Naas gaol, in one of his original letters, dated 24th August, 1798, in my possession, refers to these rumours in the following terms:—"Your mention of my valued friend Neilson I don't understand;

you seem to insinuate that he is not the noble-minded editor of the *Northern Star*, but the mean despicable informer, the colleague of a Reynolds and a Newell. O God! impossible; then, indeed, is 'judgment fled to savage beasts, and men have lost their reason.' Send me every particular respecting him that you may hear, and *believe any thing but that he would be a villain.*"

Now the date of this letter evidently corresponds with that of the compact, which had completely been fulfilled on the part of the state prisoners, by the memoir they had delivered on the 4th of August; and the allusion of Rourke must have been to that transaction, which excited so much discussion at the time, and not to an event which had occurred three months before, namely, the arrest of Lord Edward Fitzgerald. We have here the plain and obvious solution of the original question raised of Neilson's fidelity to his cause; and it is no wonder that such doubts should have arisen, when, pending that negotiation, the Government agents had caused a report to be industriously circulated, that the state prisoners, in disclosing the secrets of their Society, had given up the names of their associates.

Neilson obtained a passage from Holland, in a vessel belonging to an English merchant of the name of Ridgeway, bound to Drogheda, and was accompanied by another exile, (the real and original exile of Erin, of Thomas Campbell,) Anthony M'Cann. The vessel was subsequently seized, and the captain imprisoned, when it was discovered that Neilson had come over in her. On his arrival in Dublin, he was received

JAMES HOPE.

From an original portrait in his possession.

Published by Madden & Co.

into the house of Mr. Bernard Coile, a linen-merchant, residing at No. 13, Lurgan-street, and there he remained for about a week, keeping close during the days, and paying visits nightly to such of his old associates as had survived the terrors of 1798.

Neilson's early friend and faithful associate, James Hope, was then in Dublin, and early in September he received a message to meet Neilson at Coile's. He was informed by Neilson that he was going down to the north, and required his assistance as a guide and companion on the journey. He said, "Do not mistake; this is not a party of pleasure; if we are discovered, the event will be banishment to you and death to me." After a few days, Neilson and his companion set out for Belfast, on horseback: Neilson was disguised; he wore a wig and a pair of spectacles.

No obstacle was encountered on their route. Hope always rode on a little way before him. The first night they stopped at Charles Teeling's, at the "Naul." Teeling and his guest sat up all night. Hope remained outside, keeping guard, and could not be prevailed on to enter; but, faithful to his trust, remained at his post, in front of the house, to prevent a surprisal. In the morning, before dawn, he tapped at the window, and gave Neilson notice that it was time to set out. The following day they crossed the Boyne, where King William had passed over, and arrived the next night at Belfast. Neilson was in excellent spirits: he seemed to be in perfect health; and in mind he was as sound as Hope had ever known him. On their arrival at the outskirts of the town, Hope was sent

forward to apprise Neilson's mother of his arrival, while he, Neilson, went to his wife's residence. He remained in Belfast only three days, and all that time in complete seclusion, having only seen one person during his stay who was not a member of his family. I think it right, however, to state, that persons well acquainted with Mr. Bristowe, the sovereign of the town, state that he was not unacquainted with Neilson's arrival in Belfast; and that having reason to believe his visit was for the sole purpose of taking leave of his family, he had the humanity to remain in apparent ignorance of his return.

Neilson, after a short stay of three days, parted with his family for the last time. He met Hope by appointment at nightfall, outside of the town, and they proceeded on their journey by the way of Ballibay, where one of Neilson's daughters, (now residing in America,) was staying with the family of Mr. John Jackson, at Creeve. Neilson himself, in 1798, had for a short time been in concealment there, subsequently to his escape from the house of Bond, who was then in prison. On that occasion a search had been made for him there at midnight, and he had escaped out of his bed by a back window into an adjoining house. Mr. John Jackson was the brother of the iron-founder of that name of Dublin, who was one of the most active, and, by all accounts, the most upright and unswerving of the Dublin leaders. Another brother of theirs, Mr. Hugh Jackson, of Cremorne, in the county of Monaghan, likewise afforded him an asylum on the same occasion. One of the daughters of Hugh Jackson married Mr. William Tennent,

of Belfast, an eminent merchant of that town, who was one of the state prisoners in Fort George. This lady died soon after her marriage, at the house of Mrs. Bond, in Dublin. She left an only daughter, Letitia Tennent, who married Mr. James Emerson, the son of a respectable manufacturer of Belfast.*

Neilson and his companion remained part of the night at Creeve, and next day returned to Dublin. During his stay in that city, he resided at the house of Mr. Charles O'Hara, at Irish Town. The vessel in which his passage was taken for the United States was expected to sail a few days after his arrival, but some weeks elapsed before his departure, and during this time we find, by Neilson's letters, that he had been successfully employed in removing the erroneous impressions which had been made on the minds of some of his former associates with respect to his conduct; and his reference to the subject of those misrepresentations, in a letter of his, dated the 30th of July, 1798, can leave no doubt whatever of the precise nature of the imputations cast upon it. He says, "I glory in having been instrumental in meeting the Government on this great question;" and in another reference to this agreement, he says,

* In "The Belfast Historical Collections," p. 459, we find the following notice of one of Colonel Barber's military exploits in Belfast:—"Another dreadful plot.—Yesterday Colonel Barber, attended by a strong guard, surrounded Union-street. A cotton factory of Mr. Emerson's appeared to be their principal object; however, the houses, gardens, and dunghills of some other inhabitants did not escape without being searched, but after a laborious attack they evacuated the place without carrying off any trophies."

"You will hear abominable stories about this business, for they are already afloat; but I know you will laugh at them."

The vessel was at length loaded, and Neilson proceeded to Kingsend, the place of embarkation, accompanied by old Palmer, of Cut-purse-row, and that humble friend to whom I have already alluded, one who was never shaken or ever found wanting in the hour of need or adversity to his associates, whether to the founder of that Society, and who "watched over its cradle, and walked after its hearse," or to the last and noblest of those who sealed their devotion to its cause with their blood in its latest struggle. When Neilson was parting with Hope, he put a guinea into his hand, and the latter, though well knowing how ill he could afford even that small present, was too considerate of his friend's feelings to risk giving him a moment's pain by refusing his last gift. He took it in silence, and Neilson, observing that Hope seemed depressed, took his hand, and said in a cheerful tone, "Never despair, man! the enemy have it all their own way, and they will do injury only to themselves."

They no sooner parted than Hope gave the guinea he had just received to Palmer, and bade him lose no time in expending it in necessaries that would make a useful addition to the sea stock of Neilson; and they were immediately purchased and sent on board.

Neilson, on his arrival in New York, lost no time in turning his attention to the pursuit on which he counted for his future support, and for the means of

bringing over his family to America and providing for them. The proposal of establishing a newspaper devoted to Irish interests had met with great encouragement from his countrymen, and some of his fellow exiles promised to give the undertaking effective assistance, both in funds and in literary contributions.

He had not been long residing, however, in New York, when the yellow fever made its appearance, and obliged him and many of his friends to remove to the country adjacent. Neilson's health, which had suffered from his voyage, became, after some time, sufficiently good to enable him to make a pedestrian journey through some parts of Pennsylvania, but this amendment was of short continuance. His old complaint, the usual consequence of long imprisonment, rheumatism, returned with increased violence: but even thus shattered in health, when his poverty did not permit him to look for the consolation of seeing his family around him, he still clung to the hope of having one member of it with him—of his boy being sent to him; and it is impossible to read those letters of his in which his wishes on this point are expressed,—to consider the plea which he makes of the benefit he tries to make it appear he expected from the assistance of a boy of his tender years, and the advantages he holds out for his education, without feeling that he doted on this child, and that to behold him, and to have him near him, was the wish that was nearest to his heart. Poor Neilson was not destined ever more to set his eyes on him, or on the face of any friend or relation belonging to him.

He died at Poughkeepsy, a small town on the Hudson, about eighty-two miles from New York, on the 29th of August, 1803.

His remains were interred in the burial place of a gentleman of his name, (no relation of his,) and a small marble slab has been erected to his memory, surmounted by an urn with a harp on either side, and the following inscription :—

"Here lieth the remains of SAMUEL NEILSON,
A native of Belfast, in Ireland,
Who departed this life the 29th of August, 1803,
Aged 44 years.

If the memory of a man who discharged all the duties of a husband, a father, and a persecuted patriot, can claim a tear, here is the tribute due."

CHAPTER XXII.

The career of Samuel Neilson is connected with the most important events of the period during which the Society of United Irishmen was in being. With that of many others of his associates there is an interest of another sort blended, which arises in a great measure from some striking passages or stirring circumstances in the dangers they encountered or escaped, and relieves a serious subject with something like romance.

There is nothing indeed of romance in the character of Neilson, nothing peculiarly calculated to win golden opinions from those who look more for imaginative powers, for refinement of taste, than the sturdy qualities of mind which seem essential to those who pioneer the way for subsequent efforts of a less formidable description than are called for at the outset of the struggle. He was a blunt, bold, resolute, energetic, and enterprising man; the sincerity of his opinions, however mistaken they may have been, cannot be doubted. In their maintenance, he sacrificed his property, his health, his liberty; and

there is ample evidence that life itself, in his estimation, was of little value compared with the importance of the cause to which all his energies were devoted. Had he lived in better times, and under better government, the same qualities which made oppression hateful to him, would have rendered him a loyal subject; under any circumstances he would have proved an honest Irishman.

Whether his defects were grave and numerous enough to disqualify him for the part he played in the struggle he was engaged in;—whether his temperament was of that kind which gives a dominant impulse to a particular passion, and holds judgment in subjection while that dominion lasts;—whether a man in whose character there is supposed to be one defect, no matter how many noble qualities may be implanted with it, is to be accounted of little worth, and the alloy of a single evil habit is to be held pernicious or destructive to the whole substance of that man's virtue;—whether the views of Neilson and the other northern leaders, in the autumn of 1797 and the spring of 1798, urgently pressed on the Leinster directory, in favour of an immediate rising and a sole dependence on home efforts, under all the circumstances of the time and the daily augmenting difficulties besetting their society, were better calculated than those of the Dublin Executive in favour of foreign aid and in opposition to any attempt at insurrection without it, to promote their common object, the reader is competent to determine. It has been my duty to lay before him, as fully and fairly as it was in my power to do, every public act

of the individual whose life I have attempted to illustrate, and every document that was available to me, which seemed calculated to throw any light on the former or on his character in private life. Having done this, not carelessly, but with much labour, with some regard to Neilson's memory and still more for truth, my task is accomplished, and it remains for the reader to make his own deductions from the preceding premises. The materials from which this Memoir has been constructed form but a small portion of the documents which Neilson left with his family at his departure from Ireland. In 1803, at the period of Russell's unsuccessful attempt in the north, Mrs. Neilson, fearing that her house would be searched, sent the greater portion of her husband's papers to a friend residing in New York, to be taken charge of for her. Some years after her death, her son requested to have the papers returned. The vessel by which they were sent (the *Shannon*) was wrecked on the coast of Donegal, and the papers were lost. Had they been obtained, there can be little doubt that the reference to documents which were considered of sufficient importance to have so much trouble taken with them with a view to their preservation, would have been advantageous to the character of Neilson.

Mrs. Neilson was left with a family of five children solely dependent on her exertions for her support and theirs. She embarked in a small line of business, and the Father of the fatherless crowned her efforts with success. She was enabled, by the fruits of her industry, to bring up her children re-

spectably, to give them education, and to leave them such as it would have been her husband's pride to have found them had he lived, to have seen them in their riper years, trained to virtue and matured in useful knowledge.

Miss M'Cracken, speaking of her, says: Mrs. Neilson was a very superior woman, a most exemplary wife and mother, for whom I had the highest esteem, and continued on terms of intimacy and friendship from 1795, when I first became acquainted with her, until her death. I never saw a family so well regulated, such order and neatness, on such a limited income; and such well trained children, most amiable and affectionate to each other, and so respectful to their mother, and all so happy together, it was quite a treat to spend an evening with them. This excellent woman, esteemed and respected by all who knew her, even by those to whom her husband's political principles were most obnoxious, struggled for her family during her husband's imprisonment and exile and subsequently to his death, altogether for upwards of twelve years, and died in November, 1811, in her forty-eighth year. Her remains were interred at Newtown, Breda. The inscription on her tomb truly describes her to have been, "A woman, who was an ornament to her sex; who fulfilled, in the most exemplary manner, the duties of a daughter, wife, and mother."

The following account of William Bryson Neilson, (who is so often mentioned in the preceding correspondence,) Samuel Neilson's only son, was communicated to me by his nephew, Mr. Handcock:—

W. B. Neilson was born at Belfast, on the 17th of May, 1793. In August, 1801, he joined his father at Fort George, and continued with him until the State prisoners were removed to Hamburgh, in May, 1802.

On his father's departure, young Neilson was sent, under the care of Mr. Chambers, a son of one of the State prisoners, to his mother in Belfast. By her he was placed at the academy of that town, of which Dr. Bruce was then master.

He left this school at the end of 1806, having carried off many prizes, and evinced no ordinary talent. He had a great desire to be educated for the bar. Circumstances would not permit this course to be adopted; he was therefore placed, in 1807, in the counting-house of John Martin & Co., an old and respectable firm in Belfast. Here the same talents which had made him distinguished at school, soon gained him the confidence and approbation of his employers.

In a communication of one of the gentlemen with whom he was placed, he is spoken of in the following terms:—

"In 1811, when only eighteen, we sent him, at his own request, as supercargo, with a valuable cargo to Lisbon, in the management of which he gave us great satisfaction. He was a young man of the most splendid talents we ever knew: there was no subject in mercantile affairs that he could not make himself master of. In public matters he soon became conspicuous, and had he lived, he would have been an ornament to his country."

He returned to Belfast in April, 1812, after a residence of seven months in Lisbon. In June, 1812, he became a member of the Belfast Historic Society, and by his distinguished talents as a public speaker, obtained the silver medal which was awarded for oratorical merit.

The following year, as President of the Society, he delivered an historical address, which was published in the *Belfast Magazine*.

In a eulogium which was read before the Historic Society, by Dr. Tennent, on Neilson, after his death, this period of his life is alluded to in these words:—

"Permit me for a moment to survey that interval which distinguished him within these walls; a bright and brilliant period indeed, not more creditable to the Society, than to the individual himself. I believe I would not be accused of exaggeration if I described William Neilson as the life of your debates."

In 1813 he commenced business for himself, and took an active part in all matters where the interests of Belfast were concerned. He was particularly interested in the success of the Academical Institution, which had been established a few years before, and was one of the members until 1816, when he resigned in consequence of the following circumstance:—On Patrick's day, 1816, a large party of Liberals dined together in Belfast, and some toasts connected with the topics of the day were drunk; among the rest, one of the company proposed, "The memory of Ney," which was received with great enthusiasm. When the report of the dinner ap-

peared in the papers, the Government withdrew its grant of 1,500*l.* a year from the Institution, because some of the persons present at this dinner (Neilson among the number) who had spoken to the toasts, were members of the Institution. As many of the supporters of the Institution hoped to get a renewal of the grant, by making submission to the Government, Neilson and some others preferred resigning their offices and quitting the Institution, in order that it might not suffer from any hostile feeling towards them. A few months after this occurrence, Neilson left Belfast to settle in Jamaica, where he arrived in December, 1816. Shortly after his arrival, he formed a partnership with an extensive house there. His sojourn in Jamaica was, however, of short duration, as he was taken ill of the yellow fever, and died February 7, 1817, in the 23rd year of his age. His death was noticed in one of the periodicals of the day, and in an article by John Lawless, from which we make the following extract:—

"*William Bryson Neilson.*

"The death of this amiable and respected young gentleman is now a subject of painful notoriety. The last number of the 'Register' could have announced the distressing fact, but we could not trust our feelings in the performance of so melancholy a duty. We could wish to speak calmly and dispassionately of his merits; anxious for his fame, we did not wish to injure it by the exaggeration of partiality, and, hoping to draw instruction from his tomb, we did not hazard opinions, which, flowing from the impulse of the moment, might defeat

the object we had in view, namely to hold up William Bryson Neilson as an example to the youth of Belfast, of those great qualities which must ever command the esteem of society, the affection of his friends, and the enthusiastic attachment of his relations. We did flatter ourselves that an Irishman, like Neilson, rocked, as we may say, in the cradle of patriotism, gifted with talents of a brilliant and commanding kind, almost intuitively anticipating the instructions of art, and exhibiting in the spring time of life a maturity of intellect, of which the oldest might boast; we did hope, that a young, warm-hearted and virtuous Irishman, with qualities like those, would have lived to enjoy that station in society which his genius would have commanded, and which his integrity would have preserved. He lived, however, sufficiently long to excite the admiration of those who witnessed the display of his talents and the vigour of his mind.

"The writer of these lines has seen and heard all the modern young candidates for the palm of public speaking; he has heard great displays of talent from men who, aided by a long course of study and instruction, could succeed in filling up one hour or two hours, nay three hours, with a rich varied speech; but he has never yet seen any young man of the present day, except Neilson, who could reply to the arguments of the speakers who preceded, no matter how numerous, with a force of reasoning and a fidelity of arrangement which has often excited the admiration of those who best knew the extent of his powers."

APPENDIX.

No. I.

THE SPY SYSTEM, ILLUSTRATED BY EXTRACTS FROM THE NARRATIVE OF EDWARD JOHN NEWELL, THE INFORMER.

The history of the Rebellion of 1798, like that of every other civil war, whatever trials of heroism may be discovered in the conduct of individuals, is a record of crimes and sufferings which it is not for the interests of the people, or their rulers, should be buried in oblivion, however appalling its details. The evils that are inseparable from civil war require only to be known to be regarded by both as calamities, which extend far beyond the event of success or failure, and involve considerations of higher importance than those which are ordinarily taken into account either by those parties who rush into revolt, or the powers who resist the just, or even the unreasonable, demands of the people. It is, indeed, impossible to exaggerate the evils of civil war, but it is possible to overrate the prospective advantages which are calculated on from its success, and to overlook the sufferings which are the inevitable consequences of its failure.

It is not alone in the deadly conflict, in the outrages on humanity committed in the frenzy of popular commotion, or party violence, or lawless power, that these evils are to be met with. The direst of them, the most revolting and humiliating to the character of our common nature, are to be found

in the perfidious wickedness of those men who rise in troubled times to the surface of society from the obscurity in which their mischievous propensities lay heretofore innoxious. These are the men whom the people in revolt must expect to find among the earliest in their ranks, the most prominent in their societies, violent in their councils, conspicuous where there is security, and backward where there is danger, and who, while urging on their associates, bide their own time to betray them to their enemies.

These are the men whom the leaders of the people must expect to meet in their secret assemblies, to mingle with in private, to suffer the obtrusive familiarity of unrebuked, whose intemperate activity it is ever a task of difficulty to restrain, whose vicious courses they cannot or dare not interfere with, whom they vainly imagined to find steadfast in their cause in the times and troubles which try men's souls, and eventually encounter in courts of justice, or trace to the portals of authority, shrinking from observation, and lurking about the offices of the underlings of state.

These are the men whom the agents of Government find fit and proper persons, "when the times are out of joint," to defeat the objects of those who are inimical to their principles, or their power: wretches whom it is easy to corrupt though difficult to accredit, inasmuch as they are generally not only infamous in their lives, but singularly open and scandalous in their infamy. The employment of such men makes it necessary to treat them with consideration, to take the tutelage of their testimony into charge, to condescend to hold confidential communications with them, to wink at their iniquities, to seem unconscious of their venality, to work upon their vanity, to exaggerate their preposterous opinions of their own importance, and to conceal the viler features of their treachery under the veil of a solicitude for the interests of justice or the welfare of their country. If an alliance with such men involve their confederates

EDWD NEWELL THE INFORMER.

From a Sketch of his own prefixed to his narrative.

Published by Madden & Co

in danger, the tutelage of their testimony cannot be otherwise than revolting to the feelings of their employers. It is impossible to come in contact with them without loathing the individuals whose services are called into requisition.

In either case the consequences of the confidence that is betrayed, or the use that is made of the infamous agency of spies and informers, are such that it is hard to say whether the danger attendant on the former, or the degradation on the latter, is the evil most to be apprehended or deplored.

Of all the wretches of that band of informers, who rioted on the wages of iniquity in those frightful times—the worst, the most thoroughly debased, the vilest of the vile, was Edward John Newell, a native of Downpatrick, a portrait painter by profession. Treachery seemed to be the ruling passion of this man's life. To every friend or party he connected himself with he was false. He betrayed the secrets of the United Irish Society professedly to prevent the murder of an exciseman named Murdock. He ingratiated himself into the confidence of Murdock, and then robbed him of the affections of his wife. He became one of the regular corps of ruffians, called the battalion of testimony, who had apartments provided for them at the Castle, within the precincts of that place, which was the residence of the Viceroy, and the centre of the official business of the Government. Having sold his former associates to the Government, and by his own account having been the cause of two hundred and twenty-seven arrests, and the occasion of the flight of upwards of three hundred persons from their habitations, and many of them from their country, in consequence of the informations he had laid against them,—he next betrayed the Government, published their secrets, and fled from the service of Mr. Cooke to that of the Northern United Irishmen. Some of the latter were employed to go to Dublin to make overtures to him on the eve of the trials of Messrs. Barrett, Burnside,

and other northern prisoners; and at the same time to put Murdock in possession of certain letters of his wife, known to exist, which had been discovered in a chest of Newell's, left by the latter in Belfast. My informant, J. H., delivered these letters into the hands of Murdock. The result is alluded to in Newell's narrative, but not the cause of the denouement, which ended in Murdock's being lodged in gaol. About this time, the self-importance of this miscreant knew no bounds: he was on terms of familiar intercourse with the chief Secretary and Crown Solicitor; he corresponded with General Officers, and had power to command their co-operation when and how he thought fit to make his requisition for it. He swaggered about the castle yard with all the consequence of a distinguished government official. He disregarded the ordinary rules and regulations of the major's department in the Castle. At length, he carried his audacity to the point of taking a pistol from his pocket, and deliberately firing at a sentinel on duty at the lower castle gate, who impeded his entrance at an hour when it was forbidden to allow persons to pass. He was in the act of discharging a second pistol at the sentinel, when he was overpowered and conveyed to the guard-house. In the morning Mr. Newell was released, when it was discovered who he was. He was then sent for to the Castle, and instead of being forthwith committed to Newgate for this capital offence, *he was reprimanded by Mr. Secretary Cooke.* This statement is not dependant on the authority of Newell. The newspapers of the day make mention of the occurrence, as well as of that of Mr. Murdock's previous attempt on the life of Newell.

A meeting was at length concerted between Newell and one of the United Irishmen, named Robert Orr, a chandler, of Belfast, at a place of accommodation and entertainment for informers, called the "Stag-house," nearly in front of Kilmainham gaol. The result was Newell's departure from Dublin in the

company of Orr for Belfast. For some time he was concealed in that town, in a house near the artillery barracks. He was from thence conveyed to the house of one of the United Irishmen at Doagh, a few miles from Belfast.

It was while he was in concealment in the latter place he wrote the narrative of his life, which bears his name, and it was privately printed by John Story, a printer in Belfast, though on the title-page it purports to have been printed in London.

The narrative is unquestionably the production of Edward John Newell. Of the fate of the unfortunate wretch who wrote it there is some doubt, but a great deal of reason to fear that he was barbarously murdered, by the persons into whose hands he had fallen after his removal from Belfast. The man who had delivered the letters to Murdock, which were the occasion of the rupture between him and Newell, had no knowledge of his movements from the time he had been taken from Belfast, for the purpose of being in the immedate vicinity of the Lough, where facilities existed for embarkation, when the opportunity should occur of carrying the intention into effect, of putting him on board a vessel for America.

Murdock's wife, in the mean time, had been prevailed on by him to accompany him to America, had quitted her husband's house, and taken up her abode in a neighbouring one to that in which Newell was then living. He quarrelled with the unfortunate woman he had inveigled from her husband's house, and no sooner was he informed that a vessel was in readiness to sail for America, and the time was appointed for his departure, than he wrote to Murdock to acquaint him where his wife then was, and of her readiness to return to him; but whether this letter was written with her sanction, or with the knowledge of the persons who kept him in concealment, it is impossible to say, for it is difficult to conceive the extent or the design of such complicated villany.

One thing is certain, that Newell, by some proceeding or other of his, gave his custodians an idea that he was only biding his time to return to his old pursuits and perfidy; that he was informed that a vessel was in the Lough bound for America, that he was prevailed on to embark on board a small boat, or at least to accompany two pretended friends to the beach for the purpose of embarking, and that he never more was heard of.

The man whose name is coupled with the chief part of the infamy of this alleged transaction went to America, and died there.

M'Skimmin, the historian of Carrickfergus, informed me that he had no doubt of the assassination of Newell, nor of the authenticity of the narrative, which bears his name. On the subject, however, of assassinations ascribed to United Irishmen, M'Skimmin has taken up ideas which have no existence except in the brains of persons like himself, who have suffered at the hands of the United Irishmen, or apprehended injury from them. He states that the murder of Newell was not an isolated act of one or two individuals of the friends of those whose lives were depending on his appearance at the ensuing trials, or his absence from them; but a part of an organized system of murder, duly managed by a committee of assassination of which the northern one was a branch, that the Dublin leaders were the originators of this system, and that the assassination journal, called the *Union Star*, which he (M'Skimmin) insists was printed in Belfast, was the organ of the Northern Committee.

This idea had evidently taken such possession of the mind of M'Skimmin, that all attempts on my part to remove the impression were in vain. It was of no avail that he was informed of the *Union Star* having been got up, printed, and disseminated in Dublin; of O'Connor, Emmet, and Macnevin, having repudiated and denounced its atrocious principles; of such denunciations having been found in Emmet's

house when searched by the authorities, and having fallen into the hands of Government; of assassination being repudiated by every leading member of the society; and of the charge originally brought forward by Lord Clare, of the existence of a committee of assassination being utterly unfounded. I have taken no common pains to inquire into this subject, and the result of my research is a conviction that there exists no ground for the allegation, and I can truly affirm, if a single fact had come to my knowledge affording authentic information, on which a contrary opinion could be formed, it should not have been suppressed by me.

In the year 1797, a friend of M'Skimmin, an old pensioner of the name of Lee, known as an informer, swore against J. Cuthbert of Belfast, and some others, who were tried at Carrickfergus. Previously to the trial, an attempt was made to murder Lee, and M'Skimmin's connexion with a man of some notoriety as an informer, caused him to be suspected by the people, or M'Skimmin to imagine that he was suspected, and that it was the intention of the United Irishmen to make away with him. He took refuge in the Castle of Carrickfergus, and did duty with the old pensioners who were stationed there for several months. The apprehension which caused him to take refuge in that place had made a deep impression on his mind; it became, in short, a fixed idea, and the delusion led him to collect a mass of information; a very large portion of which consists of fabrications, which were palmed on him for facts; and provided they were injurious to the character of the United Irishmen, they were eagerly received by him. With these observations I have to preface a statement respecting Newell's disappearance and the several assassinations committed by persons supposed to be United Irishmen, drawn up by M'Skimmin.

"About June, 1798, Newell's friends wished him to leave the country and go out to America, offering him ample means. This, however, he refused, unless

Mrs. Murdock would consent to go with him. During this negotiation he remained mostly at M'Questen's, at Donegore, which he left one evening in company with two professed friends, and he was never afterwards seen. He had become again suspected by the United Irishmen of being about to give them the slip, and he was therefore consigned to *Moiley*, then a cant term for assassination. The account says he was thrown overboard from a boat in Garnogle; another, that he was shot on the road near Roughfort.*

"Though the pistol or dagger was the common mode of disposing of those charged with being informers, others were also resorted to. We have heard of one who was thrown into a burning lime-kiln; and near Belfast a house is pointed out where the victims were decoyed into to be murdered. On entering its hall a trap-door opened, and the victim fell into a cellar, where he was despatched by a man who stood ready with a hatchet to receive him. About twenty-five years ago, in making a ditch near this

* The following account of Newell was given to me by Dr. M'Gee, of Belfast, (a United Irishman,) a short time before his death :—

"In the winter of 1797, four United Irishmen were to be tried at Dublin—Barrett, Burnside, Dan Shanaghan, and Henry Joy M'Cracken. The witnesses against them were Smith *alias* Bird, the other, Newell. Bird declined to come forward, and the only apprehension then was for Newell's appearance. Certain persons were sent up from Belfast, to endeavour to buy off Newell. Robert Orr and another person met Newell at Kilmainhan on a Sunday morning, at a public-house called 'The Stag-house.' Newell had sent a messenger to some of the prisoners' friends, that he wished to meet them. He said to Orr and his friend he was very sorry for what he had done; he wished to make amends and get back to Belfast, provided he could get a certain person to accompany him to America. There was no money given to him. It was understood that he was to be sent off at the expense of the United Irishmen."

Mr. Gunning, another of the actors in the struggle of 1798, who recently died, informed me a few weeks before his death, that a Mr. White, of Ballyholme, (about ten miles from Belfast,) about fifteen years ago, had found there, on the beach, partly uncovered, some human bones; and from all the circumstances connected with the discovery, he believed them to be the bones of Newell, who was said to have been drowned there.—R. R. M.

house, a human skeleton was found, that had evidently been interred in the common clothes, some portion of them lying with the bones."

ASSASSINATIONS IN 1796—7.

"When any of these murders became known, it was said *Moiley* had got him, or that *Moiley* had eaten him.

"1796. January 5th.—The body of a stranger, said to have been an informer, of the surname of Phillips, was found in a dam near the paper-mills, Belfast.

"August 3rd.—Same year a soldier in the Limerick militia, then quartered in Belfast, was found drowned at the Strand mills near that town; he was reported to have been an informer; and it was said he had been cast into the river by his comrades on the previous night. About the same time the body of a soldier, believed to have been murdered, was cast on shore near Holywood.

"1796.—On the 19th of August, a man named John Lee was fired at, and severely wounded in the shoulder at Dumbridge; for which act some persons were sworn against by Lee, but were acquitted.

"1796.—On the night of the 8th of October, the Rev. Philip Johnston, a magistrate, was fired at and severely wounded while mounting his horse between two dragoons in Castle-street, Lisburne. About seven o'clock of the evening of the 19th of same month, a man named William M'Bride, who had lately arrived from Glasgow, was shot dead near the head of North-street, Belfast; he was also reported to have been an informer, though it is certain he was not a United Irishman. A few evenings after, his murderer also shot a man near the county of Down, end of the Long-bridge, who was immediately tossed into the river.

"1796. October 29th.—The Rev. John Cleland,

was fired at while passing along the streets of Newtownards, and on the 31st of the same month, a man named Stephenson, servant to a Mr. Gurdy, near Newtownards, was murdered at his master's door: before he died he deposed that one John Lavery, of Derryanghy, was one of his murderers. About the same time a butcher, named John Kingsbury, Belfast, was murdered near the Drumbridge: he was a professed Orangeman; some words uttered by him against United Irishmen, are said to have led to his murder.

"1797. Mr. Cumming, one of the Newtownards cavalry, was murdered in his own house, and his arms carried off. In April, an informer named M'Clure was killed, near Ballynare; and May 6th, a man was shot, charged with being an informer, near Dunnedery; he was not an informer. A man named M'Dowell, near Dromore, was shot at his own house, charged with a like offence; and an informer named Morgan, was shot in the vicinity of Downpatrick, by persons who came on horseback from Ballynahinch. About December, Neil M'Kimmon, a soldier, Argyle Fencibles, was murdered between Lisburne and Blaris camp.

"The house of one M'Clusky, county of Derry, was burnt and himself murdered, and in December, a man was murdered near Magilligan, because he had said he had seen men exercising at night; and about the same time they destroyed the property, and cut the ears off one Lenagan, in the same county. Richard Harper, an informer belonging to Saintfield, was killed on his way to Belfast. The place where he was murdered is since called Harper's Bridge."

So much for M'Skimmin's statement. Of that part of it which details murders, and attempts to murder, with all its fabrications and exaggerations, some of the statements are in accordance with the accounts I have myself received of the same atrocities; but the inference he draws from them of the

existence of an organized system of assassination is wholly erroneous.

There is no evidence, that the persons who committed those murders were United Irishmen; but there can be little doubt but that in many instances the perpetrators, or instigators, of the latter were friends of United Irishmen who had been sworn against, or whose lives were endangered by the persons they had made away with. But if the value of life was not duly estimated by the people, by whom was the example set of making death in all its ghastly forms on the scaffold, in the fields, or at the lamp-posts in the streets, familiar to their minds? In troubled times like those of '97 and '98, the evil-disposed are ever ready to take advantage of the general disorder to carry their malignant designs into effect, whether actuated by feelings of private animosity, or impelled by the desire of plunder; and every deed of violence, which then takes place, is set down to the account of those who are proscribed as rebels and enemies to the King's peace.

The following information, in connexion with this subject, was given to me by a man, whose honesty and truthfulness have a sort of proverbial currency in Belfast; by Israel Milliken, a man not unacquainted with "the troubles" of that time, nor a mere spectator in that struggle. Milliken's statement gives an insight into the crimes to which men were driven in those times; men meeting perjury with perjury, and attempts on life, in the arrangements of the panel, and the drilling of the witnesses, with the taking of life by other modes and weapons.

"Joseph Cuthbert and John Boyce, and four other prisoners, in 1797, confined in Carrickfergus gaol, were put on their trial. The witness against them was one Lee, a pensioner,—and also a pedlar, who had lodged the original information against this man before the trial came on, and who was drowned at Duneddery Bridge, three miles from Antrim. Lee was then brought forward, as a substitute for the pedlar, to

swear against them; and prior to the trial, an attempt was also made on the life of Lee, who swore that Cuthbert and some others had fired at him. Lee had been set on by a Captain M'Nevin. The attorney for the prisoners was James M'Gucken. It was determined to get two *alibis*, to prove that the prisoners were of a masons' lodge, and had been in it all that evening on which the murder was said to have taken place. Those two witnesses were sent to confer with M'Gucken before the trial; and on leaving him, one of them said it was evident that he (M'Gucken) was giving them advice that would cause them to break down. They, however, and all the prisoners' friends, thought that M'Gucken did this from stupidity, and not from dishonesty. The two witnesses were one John Sayers, a farmer, the other was William M'Coe, a publican. Some years after, Sayers became dispirited, and repented of what he had done; he came to Israel Milliken, and told him he had no peace or comfort; that he had consulted several clergymen, but they gave no ease of mind. A person present, a friend of Israel's, recommended the man to take comfort; and inasmuch as he had not borne false witness *against* his neighbour, but *for* his neighbour, instead of causing the death, he had saved the lives of six men. These witnesses, on their examination, gave so circumstantial an account of the masonic toasts, songs, and proceedings, which they described on this occasion, that the witnesses quite carried the Judge with them, and the prisoners were acquitted."

James Hope, on the subject of the assassinations ascribed to the United Irishmen, informs me, that at the Society established at Craigarogan, they came to a resolution to the following effect, "That any man who recommended or practised assassination of any person whomsoever, or however hostile to the Society, should be expelled."

At a Baronial Committee, held at Ballyclare, near Carrickfergus, James Hope and Joseph Williamson, proposed the resolution above named, it was seconded

by William Orr (who was executed at Carrickfergus), who said on that occasion, "a man who would recommend the killing of another was a coward as well as a murderer." The resolution, however, was opposed by some of the Belfast men, and it did not pass at that meeting. But no Society or Committee gave a sanction to the practice of assassination. The only persons Hope knew to have been assassinated, were M'Bride, an informer of Donegore, shot in North-street, Belfast, at Saw's Entry, in 1797; M'Clure, of Craigbally, supposed to be made away with in 1796, who suddenly disappeared and was never more heard of; Harper, of the county Down, suspected to be an informer, shot at a bridge near Ballygowan, about three miles from Belfast; Newell, from Dublin, an informer, who was traced as far as Doah, about ten miles from Belfast; Phillips, an excommunicated priest, from French Park, county Roscommon, who had sworn in a number of Defenders, had received a shilling a head from them, and subsequently had given information to Colonel King and Lord Dillon, and had several of the men thus sworn arrested. He then came to Belfast, but his character came before him; he was taken by a party of Defenders, about 1794; one of them (it was said) confessed he was present when they seized Phillips, tried him on the spot, and condemned him,—they gave him time to pray,—then put leaden weights into his pockets, and drowned him at the paper-mill stream, close to the town. Henry Caghally, of county Derry, suspected of being an informer (but no proof of the fact); he got money to take him to America, but spent the money, and remained at home; he was then seized, brought to Templepatrick by a party who gave him drink, and then stabbed him in the breast and killed him. This was two miles from Templepatrick, on the Antrim road. Hope knows of no other instances of assassination ascribed, with any probability of truth, to the United Irishmen.

In reply to a question put to the Rev. Arthur M'Cart-

ney, the vicar of Belfast, if he had ever heard of a committee of assassination existing in Belfast, with the cognizance or sanction of the leaders of the United Irishmen, I was informed by that gentleman that he did not believe there was anything of the kind; his own father had been told by some of his friends that he was marked out for assassination, and his grave had been already dug. Mr. M'Cartney replied, he did not believe it, for they would not have commenced with digging the grave of a man whom they meant to kill. Dr. M'Donnell, of Belfast, to a like question, gave me an answer to a similar effect. He thinks, however, had the cases which occurred where individuals of the society were supposed to be implicated been more reprobated by their associates generally, fewer similar acts would have been committed. The only organized system of violence that took place in the county of Antrim was after the suppression of the rebellion in 1799, when a fellow of the name of Archer, and thirty or forty more of his gang, chiefly deserters from the militia regiments, went about the country, visiting the houses of persons who had made themselves obnoxious to the people in 1798. They used to inflict the punishment of flogging upon them, two hundred lashes at one time, perhaps two hundred more in a fortnight's time at another visit; in some instances burning the houses, and in a few, putting persons to death. Archer and the ringleaders were eventually taken and executed.

Mr. Robert Simms informed the Rev. J. S. P., that the report which was at one time very generally circulated, and partially believed, of the existence of an assassination committee in connexion with the society, or at least connived at by its chiefs, was, so far as he knew, a pure fabrication.

I now proceed to lay before my readers the extracts from the Narrative of Newell, above referred to. The omissions are confined to matter which is either unimportant or irrelevant to the subject of this paper.

EXTRACTS FROM THE NARRATIVE ENTITLED

"*The Apostacy of Newell; containing the Life and Confessions of that celebrated Informer; his reasons for becoming, and so long continuing one, &c. Written by himself. London: printed for the Author.* 1798."

Dedication to the Right Hon. John Fitzgibbon, Earl of Clare, Lord High Chancellor, &c., &c., in memory of his humane heart, refined feelings, and benevolent mind. As a testimony of gratitude for his paternal counsels, which I have so long adhered to, these Memoirs are respectfully inscribed, by the Author.

Of my father or mother, I shall not say more, than that they are both descended from Scotch families, who had fled from that country at the rebellion. I was the first fruit of their union, being born in Downpatrick on the 29th of June, 1771; from my earliest infancy I showed a propensity to mischief, and during my juvenile years practised every species of it. *

I was greatly addicted to private spouting, one of the most dangerous propensities a young man could have, on account of the company he must mix with; and also to drawing, in both of which I greatly indulged myself. *

When I was about seventeen, my father having gone to the north, as was usually his custom once a year, to settle his affairs, he was one night thrown from his horse and dangerously hurted; my mother immediately went to him, leaving the care of the house to me. As the news I heard constantly of my father was far from satisfactory, and rendered me uneasy, for I really then most tenderly loved him, and on account of his being on the point of death, rendered me so completely miserable, that I went to see him. Arriving at my uncle's, where my father

then was, my mother was greatly surprised at seeing me; but was far from receiving me as a parent, and indeed I had never received from her any of that affection which mothers should have for their children. *

On my arrival in Dublin, I gave myself up solely to the enjoyments of my companions, two of them in particular, whom I informed I had determined to leave my father's house, but had not as yet formed any plan to proceed upon. *

After a few days I thought it prudent to depart, as my father was hourly expected; I therefore went to take a passage for England; but on Rogerson's quay I met Captain Johnson, enlisting seamen to go to Spain. *

We sailed for Cadiz; and on the thirteenth night at sea, being very dark, there arose a most dreadful storm: then did I first witness the dangers of the sea. *

On our voyage home we experienced the greatest hardship, having lain to for six weeks in the Bay of Biscay, where we lost our maintop mast and foretop sail yards, living on raw meat, lying in wet clothes, and constantly working at our pumps, during which time we thought our fate inevitable. *

After my return to Dublin, my father, commiserating my sufferings at sea, wished me to settle, and bound me to the painting and glazing business, which I reluctantly followed for a year, until my usual licentiousness occasioned a difference with my master, leaving this business and engaging in the glass-staining, which I practised agreeably about two years, but the like misconduct occasioned a separation from my employer, and a total separation from my father.

Spouting in private theatres, and all its concomitant extravagancies, was my constant delight; by such means and a connexion with a young woman, I was reduced to the necessity of leaving Dublin with her, and went to Limerick, in order to proceed to Baltimore in America, to which place I had several

letters of credit. We took our passage, and got on board an American ship lying in the Shannon; a king's cutter came alongside to impress the passengers, who for a time made resistance; but, being ordered to desist by the commander of the vessel, the gang got on board, pressed near fifty men, and enraged at the opposition they had met with, treated the crew and passengers with the utmost cruelty, destroying their provisions, insulting every person, and driving their cutlasses through beds and boxes, under a pretence of search for men. In the course of this affray, an American gentleman of respectability received such treatment from this banditti, that he died in a few hours.

During several weeks we were obliged to stay on shore for safety; and when we had sailed, we had not got many leagues to sea, until we were again attacked by a king's ship, and after several shots being fired, obliged us to return to Tarbert, where we were kept prisoners. I here procured an order from Dublin for my liberation, as I could not be let go to America, without swearing that I was not an artist. This ship and crew were some weeks after lost on the banks of Newfoundland.

In Limerick I again attempted business, but was again unsuccessful, and therefore returned to Dublin, where sometimes employed and sometimes idle, I spent my time, until sickness drove me to the utmost poverty and distress, and, had I not been assisted by two friends of liberty, absolute misery must have been my lot. My parents, to whom I applied, refused the smallest assistance, on account of my being a defender. *

I had long been a defender, and some time an United Irishman, in the last of which principles I have always been an enthusiast.

While a defender in this city,* I suffered the

* It is to be noted, the narrative was written and printed in the neighbourhood of Belfast, though it purports to be printed in London.—R. R. M.

greatest distress that poverty and sickness could inflict; yet such was the confidence reposed in me by the people, that at a time when my situation might have warranted suspicion they fully confided in me, nor have they had ever reason to repent of it.

About the beginning of the year 1796, I was recommended to go to Belfast by a sincere friend: "There," said he, "you will find every man a lover of his country; there shall you be rewarded for your sufferings, by the number of friends you shall find attached to your cause!" I went to Belfast: after being some time there I became an United Irishman. I was, partly on account of my activity and former sufferings, admitted much sooner into confidence than would otherwise have been the case, and higher than strangers are generally entrusted. During a space of thirteen months I regularly attached myself to the cause, in which I placed my greatest happiness; I gloried in, I revered the cause of liberty; my heart beat but to its sound; its friends were my friends, and its enemies my enemies: I neglected my trade; it was alone my study, my business, and my pleasure.

My over warmth, my too great love of the cause, were construed into a plan to deceive; and I was looked upon as an agent of administration: my most anxious endeavours to promote, were looked upon as schemes to destroy union, and I at last fell a prey to ill-judged suspicion.

In Belfast, I followed the business of a portrait and miniature painter, a business I had never dared to try before, and in which I had never received the least instruction. Necessity, however, conquered fear, and the kindness of my friends crowned my attempt of support with success.

In the course of my business I became acquainted with a Mr. Murdoch, a hearth-money collector, to whose house I went to do some pictures: during the time I was treated with the utmost kindness and attention. I thought myself esteemed by the family, and they were really so by me. So great was my

affection for them, that I forgot our difference of political opinion, and risked for them my conscience, my honour, and my oath.

Some friends of mine, who knew his character, who knew the secret villany of his heart, laid a plan to rid the world of such a miscreant, and supply themselves with the arms with which his habitation abounded. I was admitted and sworn one of this association; and though sworn, yet such was my respect and attachment to the family, (for then I knew them not,) that I apprised them of their danger, and recommended guards for the house. In return, he rewarded me by informing all he knew of my being a rebel, as he called it, and an assassin.

Here, then, the people thought themselves justifiable in their suspicion; they thought, and they thought rightly, such a rascal should not be left alive. I had papers in my possession of some value, at the appointed time I appeared not, as I should have done, to deliver up my trust, "because I was detained by illness;" fresh proof of perfidy in their eyes. Yet, I assure you, my countrymen, if my assurance will avail, except that one act of serving the Murdochs' family, I never had broke my oath, or in the least departed from that duty incumbent on me as a man of integrity.

I apprehended my life was in danger, conscious of the innocence of my intentions, and exasperated at their suspicions of me, I returned to Murdoch's house. Ill-fated return!—the cause of all my woes!

There these blood-thirsty cannibals,—these fiends, took care to blow the spark of resentment which glowed within my breast until it became a blaze; and, when once fully heated—when once raised to desperation and revenge by their insinuations—they took care I should have no time to return to reason, until they hurried me to the throne of despotism, to the chamber of seduction, to that arch betrayer of every honest heart—the insinuating Cooke.

When I arrived in Dublin, where Bob Murdoch

accompanied me, we, having been provided with money and horses by Robert Kingsmill, Esq., the ——— commandant of the Castlereagh cavalry, who is an honest Orangeman, and to whom I gave information of the societies, which were afterwards taken at Alexander's, I was conducted to Mr. Cooke by that ——— Col. R. There I met with all that sweetness of reception, that cringing servility and fulsome flattery such sycophants ever use to those whom they wish to seduce to their own ends.

To open the soul, to give the tongue an unrestrained command, the wine was freely circulated. The secretary set his pens and papers ready for the work; but I not choosing to trust much to such people, who, when they have got you in their power, think it the greatest and most fashionable way to forget their promises and plighted honour when the service is over, refused to tell any thing until I had received a pardon for the crimes I had committed.

Mr. Cooke.—Will you not trust to my honour?

Newell.—Not in this case.

C.—I assure you, you may rely on me.

N.—I don't doubt it; but you'll pardon me: where the life is affected I rely on no man.

C.—Making out a pardon will take up some days; the people of the north will hear you are here, and they will counteract our schemes, and perhaps get off.

N.—That, sir, is not my fault; this is my determination. There is no harm done; I can return again.

C.—Would not a written pardon from the lord-lieutenant satisfy you, till we can get one made out? I assure you it is of equal power. You know, my dear Mr. Newell, the state of the country. You know there is no time to be lost, and that Government, for their own sake, would not desert you; if they did, could they expect others to come forward like you?

N.—Sir, confident of the propriety of what you say, a written pardon shall satisfy me for the present.

Mr. Cooke then wrote to the lord-lieutenant, and

in a few minutes presented me with a paper, of which this is a copy:—

"*Dublin Castle, April 13th*, 1797.

"Sir,—I desire you will inform Edward John Newell, that I hereby pardon him whatever offences he may have committed against his allegiance, and against his Majesty's peace and crown.

"I am, sir, your obedient humble servant,

"*E. Cooke, Esq.* CAMDEN."

This night he did not form examinations, but asked me several questions; I informed him of the most of what I could; mentioned the men I thought dangerous, &c.; of all which he made notes. I was then permitted to depart. I waited on him early in the morning: Bob Murdoch was sent away, fearing he could not be trusted; but he knew him not; for there is no crime whatsoever but this villain would join in, for his own interest. During nine hours I sat with Cooke, he drew out my examinations, the theory of which was mostly true, but which his inventive genius highly embellished. *

Mr. Cooke, I call upon you, is this not true? Did you not make me enter in my list men with whose very names I was unacquainted? Oh guardian, worthy of our constitution! Did you not make me arrest the friend of the poor, the comforter of the afflicted, and a man of respectability, Dr. Crawford, of Lisburn; only because, in our discourse, I mentioned having once dined in his company? In like manner, the Rev. S. Kelburne, for once speaking to me in the street, because you still thought his blunderbuss levelled at your head?

Was I not obliged, to please you, to form a murder, to which I was to appear accessary, because you would not be content without it? You knew, you said, I belonged to an assassination committee. You were sure, from my character, that I was privy to murder.

I told you of one, for which you well knew exami-

nations were lodged six months before, by one really present. Could then a man be murdered twice?

Did you not, Mr. Cooke, see the falsehood, the impossibility of people trusting such a business to a fortnight's knowledge? Did you not paint to me the improbability of the accusation? Did you not bid me swear, absolutely swear, the time was longer?—told me so short a time would prejudice a jury against it; and, though you felt convicted, though you knew I lied, yet such was your thirst of blood, you drew up the following as a separate examination, fearful the people should profit by the improbability, and that Government should lose its victims.

"*Ireland*, } The examination of Edward John
to wit. } Newell, of the city of Dublin, miniature painter, who being duly examined and sworn on the Holy Evangelists, deposeth and saith, that about the month of June last, to the best of his recollection, intelligence was received, as he understood, from the camp at Blaris-Warren by the societies of United Irishmen at Belfast, that, a militia man of the city of Limerick regiment was sent to Belfast for no other purpose than to find out what he could with regard to the United Irishmen and give information against them; and therefore he was to be taken care of. That Robert Neilson, painter, of Belfast, was spending the day with deponent at Patrick Linn's, publican; that Neilson wanted to go away in the evening, and when deponent pressed him to stay, he said he must go on serious business, and he then swore deponent to secrecy on a Bible or Testament, and told him it was to kill a militia man who was a spy. Deponent then offered to go with him, and they went to the house of John Young, when he introduced him into a room where Corporal Burke and the said militia man, Thomas Dry, *alias* Jackson, John Gordon, Robert Neilson, James Burnsides were present, when they drank till nine, at

which time they were joined by Alexander Gordon. On his entrance into the room, Burke asked him was he ready—Gordon replied that it was too soon. That they then sat and drank, and the militia man began to let out his secrets, which confirmed them in their suspicions. That after leaving the house, when it was late, they were joined by John Young, the keeper of the house. They went then to take a walk down the Mall, with an intention, as they professed, of having some fun; that they were very agreeable together till they came to a bridge near the paper mill, at which time one of the company wanted to sneak off, when Corporal Burke pulled out a pistol, and swore he would blow it through the brains of the first cowardly rascal who dared to stir. The militia man then seemed to be alarmed, and wanted to return, when Young struck him, and d——d him to go on. Dry was then standing on the bridge, and he left them as deponent believes, to get the weight ready to put in the militia man's pockets. Burke then seized the soldier and dragged him up to the bridge, and struck him two or three times. Burke then gave deponent the pistol—he turned about, and at that moment Burke threw him over, and cried out, it is done by ——; they all then went home; the next day deponent saw Burke and drank with him, and deponent and Burke asked whether that job was not prettily done. Deponent says that Alexander Gordon was afterwards on the coroner's inquest, and when deponent asked how he could stand seeing him, Gordon replied it was because he was fond of fishing, or to that purpose, and further deponent says not.

"Sworn before me, the 14th April, 1797.

"*Edward John Newell.* CLONMELL."

Look, Sir, at my two examinations; see, if by the dates, I did not swear I executed that business, before I was even an United Irishman? see then if you can justify the confinement of those worthy men in prison?

When he had formed the examinations so as to answer his own intentions, and had received the opinion of the Attorney-General on their utility, Lord Clonmell was sent for, in whose dignified presence the following were sworn; though I solemnly declare, not the one fourth part of them were my words or sentiments.

"*Ireland, to wit.* } The examination of Edward John Newell, of the City of Dublin, miniature painter; who being duly examined and sworn upon the Holy Evangelists, deposeth, that about a year ago, he went down to Belfast to follow his business, that about a fortnight after he was there, he was introduced by James Malone, a notorious defender, of the county of Leitrim, as deponent believes, and who now lives at Killead near Belfast, and Barney Close, who has run away for debt, to John Gordon, clerk to Mr. John M'Cracken, muslin manufacturer, at the house of Margaret Magee, publican, in Mill-street, Belfast, who swore him upon a Bible to be an United Irishman, and the oath that he took was the oath of the United Irishmen, as set forth in their printed book of constitutions, and the said Gordon instructed him in the signs of the United Irishmen; Malone and Close and another man were present; the said Gordon then ordered him to attend a meeting of United Irishmen the Sunday fortnight afterwards, which he did with Malone and Close. The meeting was very full, Gordon read the constitution, and deponent again took the oath from Miller, a printer, to whom he paid sixpence, also Rice, Quinn, and a great many others were present, all of whom heard him take the oath and seemed to understand what he said, they all having, as deponent believes, taken the oath of an United Irishman. At this house the room was so full (which is the house of Flanagan, a publican on the quay) and so hot that deponent was forced soon to go away. The Sunday

following deponent was at another meeting, at the house of Crozier, a publican at Belfast, where the numbers were so great that they parted into two societies; Gordon was made secretary to the division to which the deponent was allotted; and they only collected the different subscriptions, and elected the officers of the society. That deponent was at several other meetings, and that he at first considered that the objects of the United Irishmen were, mere reform of Parliament and emancipation of the Catholics; but that at the time the Yeomanry Bill passed, Gordon, who was then delegate to the county committee, acquainted him that these were not the real objects of the United Irishmen, but entirely to overthrow the State, King, and Government, and that there were laws then in consideration, to substitute in the place of the present constitution, when it should be overturned. Afterwards, about the beginning of January, at a divisional baronial meeting, at the house of Mrs. Nichol's, on a Sunday morning, when he (deponent) was recommending, that the United Irishmen should take the yeomanry oath, as it did not bind them to support, as he thought, the particular laws they complained of, said Gordon bid him not be busy, and then explained that the object of their societies was to overturn the State, King, and Constitution, and introduce a republic; and the meeting surprised at deponent's want of knowledge; and they all concurred with Gordon. At this meeting, John Henderson, James Miller, John Grimes, Allen Ingram, —— Mitchell, publican, Robert Montgomery, —— M'Cauley, publican, and several others were present: and at this meeting Gordon read a report from the county committee, to which he was delegate; stating the measures which the county committee had taken to supply the United Irishmen in gaol with money, the sums which had been spent, and the manner. That they had taken methods to intimidate juries, and to circulate, that the man who found an United Irishman guilty, should lose his life; that their friends in Dublin would take care to

prevent the prisoners in Dublin from suffering, were they even found guilty. Gordon also reported the numbers of United Irishmen, which was, to the best of his recollection, about 70,000; also gave in a return of arms, ammunition, pikes, cannon, &c.; and he recommended to them to make a voluntary subscription for mounting six pieces of cannon; after which many subscribed sums of money for that purpose.

"Deponent saith, that about December last, in order to carry into effect the purposes aforesaid, there was an order from the county committee, which Gordon delivered, for all the societies to elect military officers; that Gordon himself, Philip Kelly, and Robert Philips, were elected by his society, which is No. 69; that the officers of every nine societies should form a military committee, and three members be elected from the different divisional military committees, to make the head military committee. That the following persons form the divisional military committee to which he belongs, viz.:—John Gordon; Philip Kelly, weaver; Robert Philips, weaver; Robert Neilson, painter; John M'Can, jeweller; Richard Magee, cloth-merchant; James Corkran, shoemaker; William Scott, a clerk; Ernest Corkran, tailor; James Burnside, weaver; John Queery, book-binder; John Shaw, cloth-merchant; John Tennent, merchant; Henry Speer, cloth shop-keeper; William Templeton, clerk in the *Northern Star* office; William Kean, ditto; James Green, shoemaker; John Grimes, merchant; John Dunn, shoemaker; Allen Ingram, smith; Robert Radforn, saddler; Robert Montgomery, a clerk; Hamill, publican; Alexander Kennedy, clerk to William Tennent; all of Belfast: and that he had been at four meetings of the military divisional committee; but little has been done except passing certain resolutions with respect to discipline, which deponent drew up, and which Gordon was to lay before the executive committee.

"Deponent says, that about six weeks ago, Gordon reported from the county committee, that reports had been received from all the committees in and

near Belfast, that they were ready to take the field when ordered by the executive committee, and that they thought delay would be prejudicial to the cause; and in the evening of that day, Gordon told deponent, that a million of money was going or gone to the French, to induce them to invade Ireland. Deponent further says, that at the time of the French appearing off the coast, Gordon gave instructions to his committee, in the name of the county committee, that the people should keep quiet, and put up with any insult, sooner than give reason for Government to injure them; and that those who told the people it was time to rise, would be of disservice; but if the French effected their landing, fresh orders would be issued. All the officers of the United Irishmen were instructed to make up their lists, which they did, and deponent gave in the list of his men, which was thirty-six or thirty-seven. Deponent says, that matters are conducted with great secrecy among the United Irishmen; that the inferior committees are not let into the secrets of the superior, either the county or provincial committees: and deponent understands that there is an executive committee in Belfast, but he does not know of whom it is composed. Deponent further says, that he verily believes he has often heard the same; that Dr. Crawford, of Lisburn, is one of the principal leaders of the United Irishmen: that in the course of last summer, at the house of Dr. Derhams, Dr. Crawford gave him the sign of an United Irishman with his left hand, and then called deponent out of the room, and asked him whether he had any constitutions of the United Irishmen in his pocket, and on his saying no, he said he should always carry one with him, as he might watch the sentiments of persons in company, and take favourable occasions for making them United Irishmen. Examinant also says, the Rev. Mr. Kelburn, of Belfast, is one of the heads of the United Irishmen; and that he acknowledged to him last year, that he was one of the county committee, and asked if he had not received their last report, and seemed

surprised and angry when deponent told him he had not. Deponent further says, that one of the great objects of the United Irishmen, is to swear the soldiers and militia men to be United Irishmen, and to seduce them to desert, and that every exertion is, as he believes, made for that purpose. Deponent further says, that in last summer, John Golding, carver and gilder, of Stephen-street, Dublin, James Murphy, of Kilcock, in the county of Meath, and —— Metcalf, came to Belfast, in order to join the defenders of Dublin, with the United Irishmen of the north. Deponent met Golding in the streets, whom he knew in Dublin, as member of the philanthropic society, to the best of his recollection. He then introduced them to Thomas Dry, *alias* Jackson, who carried them to Joseph Cuthbert, tailor, in order to swear them; and about two or three days afterward, he was present when said Cuthbert swore Golding to be a secretary of the United Irishmen, and gave him two books of United Irishmen's constitutions, with which he went away from Belfast. Deponent further says, that about December last, the military committee elected twelve of their members to be a private committee, for the purpose of securing the safety of their societies, by preventing detection, by giving notice of suspected persons, and taking off informers; but nothing particular has been yet done by that committee, of which the following persons are members:—John Gordon, James Burnsides, Richard Magee, John Queery, Henry Speer, —— Queery, Robert Neilson, junior, —— Hamill, John Shaw, John Grimes, Robert Montgomery, and himself. Deponent further says, Carmenthan, a French teacher in Belfast, is a secretary of United Irishmen, he having shown him a table of the societies in Belfast, amounting to one hundred; and he has seen him in his society, and he is considered as very active. Deponent further says, that he knows John Simpson, cloth-merchant, to be an active United Irishman; and said Simpson, in company with William M'Cracken, Alexander Gordon, and Thomas Storey, went with

deponent, in the course of last summer, to seduce the artillerymen at Belfast, to the house of M'Crea, where they met two artillerymen, one of whom was Smith, and settled that fourteen artillerymen should desert, and be furnished with clothes and money; and the said Smith did afterwards desert, and he understands the others also deserted. Deponent also says, that he understands that the United Irishmen expect the French soon to land, and that they intend to join them; and deponent believes that there will be soon an insurrection, and that the Government and the constitution will be overturned, unless Government shall prevent it by immediate and vigorous measures. Deponent further saith, that at the time of giving this examination, he has seen a printed copy of the declarations, resolutions, and constitutions of the societies of United Irishmen, which are the same as those referred to in this deponent's examinations, and which he has now marked and identified.

"Sworn before me, this 14th day of April, 1797.

"*Edward John Newell.* CLONMELL."

The next morning, his black servant came to me to the Ulster hotel, where I then lodged, with a note, and on waiting on Cooke, he informed me I must immediately go down to Newry; that I should there meet General Lake, to whom an express had been sent for that purpose, and several other officers, with the commander-in-chief. He gave me ten guineas and the following note, which was carried by Bob Murdoch:—

"*Dublin Castle, April 15th*, 1797.

"Sir,—The bearer of this, Mr. Murdoch, is a firm friend of Government, and accompanies a Mr. Newell, who has given us the most valuable information concerning the United Irishmen of the north: you will please to allow him any money or number of

men he may demand; they are to obey his orders, and you are to take his advice in all affairs relative to this business.

"I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

"EDWARD COOKE.

"*To Lieutenant-Gen. Lake, Belfast.*"

On my way to the north, I met Lord Carhampton and his aid-de-camp, Captain Eustace, who had been waiting for me some time. After dinner, over our wine, we had a great deal of discourse about United-ism: he described his knowledge of an assassination committee being in Belfast, of which, he said, he had several informations on oath, that Joseph Cuthbert, a tailor, was one of the principal men who formed it.

He expressed his sorrow, that interesting business which called him to another part of the kingdom, prevented his going to Belfast, and explained the tortures and punishments he would inflict on the rascals, who had been guilty of such crimes. *

On our leaving the Man of War, he desired me to stop where he did, as his guards would be a protection to me, and that he would expect to meet me at Hanlon's in Newry, at one o'clock the next day; according to his directions I met him at the hour and place appointed, on Easter Sunday, April 16th. After a long discourse between him, General Lake and me, we settled that the next evening at eight o'clock, troopers should wait upon me at Murdoch's to conduct me to the general's house at Belfast.

While in Newry, the following occurrence took place: a Mr. Turner of that town, was standing in the parlour of the inn, talking to Miss Hanlon; he had about his neck a green handkerchief, which Lord Carhampton perceiving, went into the room accompanied by a number of officers, and demanded in a most insolent and ungentlemanlike manner, how he dared to wear round his neck, that symbol of rebellion? to which Mr. Turner, in the most polite manner, replied, it might or might not be a symbol,

it was immaterial to him; he liked the colour and would wear it.—Lord C. then told him, he would tear it from about his neck—Mr. T. in the boldest manner told him, while surrounded by his officers, he might do as he pleased; and putting his hands behind his back, held forward his head until Lord C. took off the handkerchief. In any other situation, my Lord, said Mr. T. you durst not have done so; your behaviour is not that of a man; you shall find that I am one, and you must acknowledge yourself guilty of robbery; on leaving the room, Lord C. asked who was that rascal? Mr. Turner himself, answered he should find he was a gentleman. Lord C. then told the officers present, wherever they met this symbol of treason and rebellion, no matter on whom, they should tear it from them and trample it under foot; he had set the example. In the course of the evening or morning, Lord C. received a note from Mr. T. the consequence of which was, Lord C. making an ample apology to Mr. T. for the impropriety of his behaviour.

That evening Lord Carhampton gave me the countersign, which was his own name, for the purpose of going through the town, and having any person I knew dragged to the guard-house.

On my arrival at the house of General Lake, he met me in the hall, and introduced me to Col. Barber, and to the perpetual high constable of Belfast, the consequential little William Atkinson. After the necessary introduction, the general asked me how I first intended to proceed? I said, the soldiers, whom I had informed against, were those I intended first to arrest. His answer was, there should be no soldiers arrested. I told him, I would certainly take them, as the very men who were in danger from me, might be those who went as a guard with me, and that instead of protecting, might themselves be the first to injure me. He said it was true: yet, his determination was no soldier should be made a prisoner, and his commands should be so. I put him in mind of the orders he had received;

of my not being under his command, and that if I could not do as I pleased, would return to the castle and inform Government he had prevented the execution of the scheme settled between Cooke and me. When he found I was determined, he acquiesced, and told me Col. Barber would do every thing I wished, of which the Colonel himself in the most flattering manner assured me.

We then, according to my plan, set guards at the doors both front and rear of every public-house to which the friends of liberty generally resorted; and after trying the houses of the individuals against whom we had warrants,—we searched those of the publicans where we had left the sentries, and took (according to Cooke's directions) all those we had or had not any thing to warrant such arrest, except their being suspected to be honest men. After we had made prisoners of near twenty worthy fellows, we marched them to spend their time in the solitary confinement of the Colonel's Bastile, the Artillery Barracks. We paraded all parts of the town, and did not disperse until past four in the morning. Col. Barber told me, at parting, he would call out to see me in the morning, but as I was fatigued, we agreed to defer our nocturnal rambles until Wednesday. Next day, I received, through the hands of Murdoch, the following note:

"Colonel Barber's compliments to Mr. Murdoch, begs he will tell Mr. Newell, that some very particular business prevents his calling on him this day, but will be at Mr. Murdoch's on the forenoon of to-morrow. *Tuesday Evening.*"

The next day, April 18th, Col. Leslie, attended by an officer, called on me at Murdoch's: he said he came out to let me know, he had been informed by Gen. Lake that some of his men were to be taken up, and that he would not allow it, as he was confident they were innocent, and not a more loyal set of men in the kingdom. As to their innocence, I replied,

I should not account to him as I had done it to those who were above him, and from whom I had received such power as made me despise his resolution; and that I would arrest and bring in their place, whoever should try to prevent me from making them prisoners. He asked, who were the first in his regiment to be taken? I informed him of Corporal Real, and either twelve or thirteen others:—they were arrested by Col. Leslie, on his return to town, as I understood to prevent the disgrace of my taking them out of his regiment. They all denied having any communication with United Irishmen, or knowing anything about the business, and ever continued so; except Corporal Real, who, on being stripped of his regimentals and threatened with immediate transportation to the bastile of Dublin, where every cruelty of punishment should be inflicted on him, confessed every thing, and afterwards prosecuted the others to conviction. The reason of my discovering against the Monaghan soldiers was, because they had among themselves threatened the murder of their officers, as I was informed. This, even when my utmost wishes were for the success of the cause, I never thought it would attend on such complicated crimes. *

But to return. On Corporal Real's confession of what I had informed, the following are my examinations.

"*County of Antrim, to wit.* } The examinations of Edward John Newell, who being duly sworn upon the Holy Evangelists, and examined before Gerard Lake and Lucius Barber, Esqrs., two of his Majesty's justices of the peace for the said county:

"Sayeth, That on or near the month of December last, in the 69th society of United Irishmen, he met Corporal Real of the Monaghan Militia, and that he sat while all their business was doing; that by desire of Gordon and John Henderson, he examinant, and a man of the name of Atkinson, gave Real two constitutions, first administering the secretary's oath, as

set forth in the constitution, and gave him the thanks of the societies and committees for being so active, and that he assured him he had himself put up 37 or 38 of the Monaghan Militia. Signed, &c.

"*9th April*, 1797. *Edward John Newell.*"

Colonel Leslie, in the most polite and gentleman-like manner, came out to Murdoch's with the same gentleman, and apologized for the doubts he had formerly expressed, for his behaviour on that day; and assured me, that so convinced was he of my propriety, that if I chose, he would call out the whole regiment in the barrack-yard, and whoever I pointed, should, without any thing more, be led to instant confinement. This proof, however flattering of his confidence, I did not accept.

We began then, on Wednesday, our very disagreeable visits, which we continued every night that week, until Saturday, taking care never to throw away our time, or return empty-handed to our quarters. Rather than do so, we one night, with triumph, marched to the barrack, the old volunteer drums, which were lying on the loft of a porter-house. No place was sacred; we went where, and demolished what we pleased; destruction or imprisonment to those who dare to resist, without the least fear of punishment on the hand that inflicted it. *

On Saturday, I received the following note from Colonel Barber, and according to his directions, deferred our visits till next evening.

"*Belfast, Saturday, April 22nd*, 1797.

"Sir,—Please to inform Mr. Newell, that Gen. Lake desires the search may be delayed until to-morrow night. Sunday being an idle day, the probability is that many of them will be taking their glass, and planning together; so that we may expect more success then, than if attempted this night.

"And am, Sir, your most obedient

"and very humble Servant,

"*Mr. Murdoch.* L. Barber."

On Sunday morning I received the following, the business of which was Murdoch's excessive loyalty, which had made him fire at those men for daring to pass his house after dark.

"*Belfast, April 23rd,* 1797.

"Sir,—At the desire of Gen. Lake and me, Mr. Cavan is willing to drop all prosecution his people intend carrying on against you; I, therefore, recommend it to you to do the same by them, as I partly engaged for your so doing.

"If this merits your approbation, I suppose you'll give your attorney notice what has been agreed on, that the bills may be ignored. Be so good to mention to Mr. Newell that the traps shall be all set, and safe guards placed over them, early this night, and that two orderly dragoons shall be at your house a quarter before nine.

"And am, Sir, your most obedient
"and very humble Servant,

"*Mr. Murdoch.* L. BARBER."

In the evening, the sport of man-hunting again commenced with our usual success, having been executed in the same manner. That evening we showed how little respect was paid to propriety of conduct, for not even a Freemason lodge, in which some of those determined enemies of despotism were sitting, could protect them from being taken; although, for once, we acted rather mildly; for, by my orders and knowledge of the men present, I might have marched almost every man to prison. We took but one; nor should that one have been taken, but that his name had been in the warrant, Mr. William Davidson. The alleged crime was, coming into a room where some papers were reading, and approving of the manner they were written; in consequence of which, the following examinations were filed.

"*County of Antrim, to wit.* } The examination of Edward John Newell, of Belfast, who being duly sworn on the Holy Evangelists, and

examined before Gerard Lake and Lucius Barber, Esqs., two of his Majesty's Justices of the peace for said county, saith, That on or about the month of February last, in the house of M'Cauly, a publican in the said town of Belfast, there attended a meeting of the sixth Divisional Committee of United Irishmen, of which he examined was a member, and that he there met William Davidson; that said Davidson remained there during all the time of business, reading reports, voting supplies to arm United Irishmen, and hearing the business of the county and provincial meetings; the state of a number of arms, ammunition, &c. that examinant produced an address for the speedy method of having United Irishmen properly disciplined, and that said Davidson gave his vote of approbation and support to the address, for the purpose of having it laid before the executive committee; that therefore Davidson is an United Irishman, and therefore a dangerous man.
" *E. J. Newell.* Sworn, &c. *April 22nd*, 1797."

After parading the town, we returned with the colonel, where with wine, loyal toasts and execrating of the rebels, we spent the remainder of the night, and then, in the greatest style, were guarded to our respective habitations. This sort of business continued for that week in the same routine. In that week, I received from Col. Barber twenty guineas, and a desire to demand as often and as much as I chose. During this time the general accompanied by crowds of officers, daily attended at Murdoch's to look what should be done with those taken, and who should be arrested next. On Thursday evening having expressed a determination of appearing in Belfast on Saturday morning, to arrest some people who were too much on their guard to be taken at night, I on Friday received the following note.

" Colonel Barber, has just received Mr. Newell's note, will call on him before eleven o'clock tomorrow. In the meantime, hopes he will not at-

tempt coming into town, until he sees or hears from him. Appearing in Belfast without the approbation of Gen. Lake might be improper, and not have the good effect remaining quiet might produce; as neither Mr. Newell nor Col. Barber, can tell the instructions General Lake may have received from Government; therefore it is incumbent in Colonel Barber and Mr. Newell to wait the general's pleasure, and follow the directions he may give.

"*Belfast, Friday, April 28th*, 1797."

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In the *Northern Star* appeared an advertisement to this effect: "Though great rout has been made about people taking up arms with their faces blackened, yet there is no notice taken of a ruffian, who, with an handkerchief on his face, haunts the town to the ruin of peace and conviviality; and one, who, if we are informed right, is to receive £3,000, for swearing to every man obnoxious to Government." In answer of which I wrote these reasons, as they were dictated to me by Col. Barber, many of which were distributed.

"To all honest Men:

"Roused with indignation at the means which the editor of the *Northern Star* has taken to blind your eyes, and raise in your breast that abhorrence, which every man must have to the villain who would barter his conscience and the blood of his countrymen for gold—common justice requires that I should say something to confute their malice.—Long have I been wandering in delusion; long have I been what they call a steady and honest man; ever active to promote what I then thought the cause of liberty, and in which I had been too much an enthusiast. At first I was blinded by the idea of a parliamentary reform, and long thought that alone was their consideration; and even when my eyes were open, when upon a thorough knowledge of the business, I knew that a total revolution and extermination of Government and its friends were its aims;—that bloodshed

and anarchy alone were to prevail; and that all the enemies of their constitution were, without mercy, to be butchered;—still I stood firm to my principles, and still should have been so, but for their returns to my constancy and activity. When, for happening in the course of business to visit at the house of a friend to Government, the assassination committee of Belfast would send their agents to murder a man who never gave them cause even in the smallest manner to be displeased with him; when without preface, daggers, knives, and pistols are shown to him as a reward for his services; what heart but must be roused to revenge for such a return? what heart but must abhor that community who could plan and execute such premeditated villany?—These, then, are my reasons for my proceedings, not the promises of Government; nor did Government ever hold out any artifice or bait to bribe me to the business; but conscious how long, and how far, I had been led astray, I thought some restitution should be made my country for the time I had been an instrument in promoting her ruin. Unsolicited, therefore, I went to Dublin; unsolicited, I made my discoveries, and so will go through the business, as a debt I owe every honest man, and as what alone by helping to save my country from confusion, can alone cause pleasing sensations to the mind.—Be not then, my countrymen, longer blind to the infatuation of your situations: let me have the pleasure of calling you from ruin—what do you fight for—and what is against you? The law, the army, and all the true friends of liberty and peace.—For what do you fight? For ends you don't understand, for ends you never can obtain; and which if attained, you never could enjoy.—Consider, an ignominious death constantly awaits you, and should you be fortunate enough to escape that, the reward of your services from what you now esteem your friends, like mine, would be daggers when they had received all the services you could render them.

"Edward John Newell."

I returned about four o'clock on Sunday morning, April 30th, from the last of those nightly expeditions, in all of which Bob Murdoch acted as my aid-de-camp, but was too cowardly to even enter a house with me. About twelve in the day I received this note:—

"*Belfast, Sunday, April 30th*, 1797.

"Sir,—An express is just come from Mr. Cooke for your immediate repairing to Dublin.

"You will therefore, without loss of time, directly come to my house, as I have some things to communicate to you, and transact, prior to your leaving this! Let young Mr. Murdoch accompany you. Slip in, and in the most private manner you possibly can; but be sure have some of the Highlanders in view, lest some insult might be offered you:

"And am your humble Servant,

"*Mr. Newell.* Lucius Barber."

We then took our leave of the family, some of whom I parted with sincere regret, and old Murdoch having a sore leg, escorted us on horse-back, as far as the long bridge. When we arrived at Colonel Barber's, he showed me an express, that I was wanting to appear before the secret committee of the parliament, that he had carriages provided, and that General Lake would attend me immediately. On his arrival, we settled about my constantly informing him of those who should be taken; a list was to be sent to me, and I was to mark such as were dangerous, who were immediately to be arrested. I then got *twelve guineas* from Colonel Barber; he wanted to give me more, but I had no use for it; I also received the following note:

"Sir,—Agreeable to your commands, I send up Mr. Newell, and inform you, that since his arrival here he has been indefatigable in performing his duty and your commands; running, in the perform-

ance, every risk of his life—and in which he has also been accompanied by Mr. Murdoch :—

" And am, Sir, &c.

"*April 30th*, 1797. G. LAKE."

" *Edward Cooke, Esq., &c.*

During the time I was at Colonel Barber's, Colonel Leslie brought up a soldier of the name of Donelly; a man with whom I had been formerly intimate, and against whom I had given information: this fellow, with the greatest firmness and effrontery, denied the least knowledge of me, though I recalled to his memory many circumstances which would have staggered the confidence of any man but himself. He denied knowing the people I mentioned; did not know where I lodged; had never seen me before. Some time after, I quietly asked him, pretending at the same time to be otherwise engaged, how long he had been acquainted with Magee before I had seen him drink tea there. The simplicity of the question, the motive of which he did not perceive, put him off his guard, and he answered about three weeks. When he found he had betrayed himself, he then acknowledged the truth of what I had said.

A little before our departure, a Mr. Felix O'Neal, who, no doubt, had heard of my being in town, and not having the pleasure before, I suppose, wished to see me, being old acquaintances; he came towards the Colonel's to have that satisfaction. As it would be ungenerous to let such a mark of his esteem go unrewarded, I recommended him to the Colonel, who immediately claimed his acquaintance, and provided him with a *free* lodging, and had the goodness, in a few days, to have him carefully removed to the metropolis.

The following examinations are the only remaining ones of which I have a copy, from amongst a vast number laid before Generals Lake and Barber, at Murdoch's. These were lodged some days after the prisoners being arrested.

"*County of Antrim* } The examinations of Edward
to wit. } John Newell, who being duly sworn upon the Holy Evangelists, and examined before Gerard Lake and Lucius Barber, Esqrs., two of his Majesty's justices of the peace for said county, Saith, That on or about the latter end of January last, in the house of William Astler, Belfast, publican, he there was in company with the said William Astler, and a man of the name of James Irvine; that they drank for some time, and that he knew Astler, by his behaviour, to be a United Irishman; that at the request of the same William Astler and Irvine, he, examinant, swore the same James Irvine to be a United Irishman, the said Astler providing a Prayer-book or Bible; and that the said Astler bolted the inside of the parlour door, and was present, aiding and assisting examinant in administering the oath.

"EDWARD JOHN NEWELL."

"Sworn before us," &c.

We left Belfast about four o'clock, the 30th of April, and at twelve the next day, arrived in Dublin, having travelled in chaises and four, which were carefully ready at every inn: an express went before for the purpose. We were accompanied by *little* Atkinson, Lieutenant Elison, and Major Fox, who bore the expense of the journey, and had also a strong escort.

The guards made the people believe us to be prisoners; and when we stopped at an inn, numbers flocked round the carriages, commiserating our sufferings, and requesting to know how they might assist us. I own that my heart bled at their generous treatment.

When we arrived in Dublin, we waited on Messrs. Cooke and Pelham, who, after questioning us on the good effects produced by what had been done, and a determination of prosecuting the scheme of *terror* further, informed me, that on Tuesday I should be before the Committee of the House of Commons; and on my going away, gave me *ten guineas*, to take care of myself, until a place was provided for me in

the Castle. This was in one fortnight £36 8*s*. I had received; a very promising appearance on the first commencement of the business; but, as the sequel will show, falls far short of the manner I was afterwards treated.

During two or three days, I dined with Mr. Fox; and shall only give, as a proof of his generous treatment and the *allowance* of Government, that I have seen him, for one dinner and wine, for six persons, pay *above seven pounds*. The remainder of that week, and part of the next, I slept at Mr. Cooke's, in the Castle, and breakfasted with himself. Murdoch and I dined and supped in the Castle Tavern, at the rate of *three guineas* a day, which Mr. Cooke cheerfully accounted for.

On the 3rd of May I attended in the Speaker's chamber at the Parliament-house; and, at two o'clock, was admitted to the room where the Secret Committee of the Commons were then sitting. After the usual formalities, I was, with great ceremony, placed in a high chair, for the benefit of being better heard.

I went through the subject of the examinations, *improving largely* on the *hints* and *instructions* Cooke had given me; propagating circumstances which never *had*, nor, I suppose, *ever* will happen; increased the number of United Irishmen, their quantity of arms and ammunition; fabricated stories which helped to terrify them, and raised me high in their estimation, as a man whose perfect knowledge of this business made his information of highest importance. I told them of laws framed to govern the republic, when they had overthrown the present Government; many of which they approved of highly, though they had no foundation but the effusions of my own brain. I embellished largely the dangers that royalty, and its friends, were liable to, from the machinations of the United men, who, I informed them, were regularly disciplined, and constantly improving themselves in military tactics: assured them, there were men of the first rank and abilities connected with this business; that the French were hourly expected;

they were to land at Galway, not at Bantry, as they supposed; that the people looked with eagerness for their arrival; and that Government should not trust the people in the south, who had formerly pretended to rise in their defence, their loyalty being only *finesse*, the readier to join the French on their landing; that I was confident, from the disposition of the people, they would, in a few weeks, even if they did not arrive, attempt an insurrection, in which they were sure of succeeding, on account of their numbers, the justice of their cause, and their hopes from the soldiery.

They seemed dreadfully terrified at my information, and instantly became incapable of asking me any more questions relative to this business. Will it be believed that a boy, even one of the swinish multitude of the north, filled with consternation and terror the leaders of the army and the senate!—they who are to face the conquerors of Italy could *he* make tremble, by relating scenes of imaginary terrors!

Among many papers which I read were the following, which is a part of the papers I before alluded to.

"*March*, 1797.

"*The Address of Edward John Newell, of the City of Dublin, to the Military Committees of Belfast, to accompany his Papers, signed by the* 69*th, and voted by the Divisional to be laid before the Baronial Committee.*

"Citizens,—At this present time, when anarchy and confusion prevail; while the spirits of our fellow-citizens are depressed; while the agents of administration are by every means, legal or illegal, strengthening their faction, and devising new schemes to make further additions to it; while our country is degraded by those abuses which must hurt the feelings of every true son of Ireland;—I say now is the time for every honest man to speak his sentiments: and he is not an honest man who does not—not only to speak his sentiments, but also by his advice to

assist the completing the means of rescuing us from those injuries. It is not to be a mere *steady* man that fulfils his obligation; he should be an *active* one, and *assist*, by *every means*, the cause with which he is connected.

"Fully impressed with the truth of these sentiments, I formed to myself such maxims as I think should be infused into the people, and such as I see have been shamefully forgotten.

"In the first instance, *military discipline* (in this country alone) has been quite neglected: that which alone can give weight to our endeavours;—that on which I may say success alone depends. Without discipline, what can be attempted? This alone damps the spirits of our friends. Tell a man unacquainted with discipline of the injuries he suffers, though he may be willing to resent them, what can he attempt? But tell the man properly acquainted—paint in true and striking colours the oppressions they labour under, their hearts are no sooner roused to revenge, than their hands are ready to execute it.

"Think, citizens, of the disgrace that must accrue from it;—that to find the men of Belfast, whose steady perseverance has preserved our cause; whose wise conduct alone has reared it from infancy to its now glorious maturity, that they, to whom all the citizens of Ireland look for example, should alone be unable to resist them in the field, and that only from being undisciplined. We look to foreign friends; but will they be willing to join with men unacquainted with manœuvres? Certainly not; such a junction must be the inevitable ruin of the whole. I know the old volunteers are among us; but what are their numbers, when compared to the community at large?

"I am sorry to say, we have military officers who are so far from considering the necessary means and exertions to fill their stations, that they do not even properly understand their situations or their consequence; but their pride being gratified by appointment, every other feeling is entranced, and they are

blind to the consequences that may result from their stupidity and neglect.

"Let them, then, by you be roused to activity; instruct them how to proceed; let public thanks stimulate, and be the reward of those who do their duty, while public disgrace should be the attendant of neglect.

"On the day of retribution, I doubt, without some stimulus to immediate exertion, or fear of disgrace by dastardly behaviour—I say I doubt our first muster will look very poor; that those half United Irishmen, as I may call them, will at the first keep themselves back, that they may be able to return those the compliment, who gloriously step forward; by saving themselves to fight for them, another day, when superiority of numbers will leave them less doubt of success.

"Let the man, then, who is not ready at a moment to join the friends of his country; let that man, however well he may afterwards behave, never enjoy public confidence, and be for ever exempt from all military appointments; let him, also, until he has proved by his conduct he deserves it, be deprived of the honour of wearing the Green Cockade. Such and such like disgraces attending upon cowardice, must rouse the smallest spark of manhood into action.

"These and their attendants, are part of what I think our wants, and what I shall exert myself to have remedied, and though my abilities are but weak,—I trust my hints will excite attention in those who are blessed with a capability of proper execution. Health and Fraternity.

"Edward John Newell."

The Attorney General, after a long discourse upon the nature and danger of what he had heard, thought it would be advisable to try to conciliate the people, by granting them some of their wishes until Government should be better prepared to resist; if granting would have the desired effect. He then

addressed me: "Mr. Newell, you must now consider that we are a select committee of the Parliament of Ireland; that, that Parliament is to be guided by these gentlemen, and that these gentlemen are to be guided in their proceedings by you: weigh well, then, the situation in which you now sit, and its consequences, and tell me, would a reform of parliament please the people, and put an end to disturbances?" —"Sir, from my knowledge, nothing but the overthrow of Government and establishing a republic would now satisfy the people."

Major Fox, Lieutenant Ellison, and little Atkinson were then called to identify the papers, which had been seized with the societies taken in Alexander's, according to my information; and for which so many of our countrymen are now sustaining the loathsome sufferings of a pestilent tender. We were then dismissed, with many thanks for our attention, and with every encouragement for our continuance in loyalty. I should have mentioned that Mr. Toler, the Solicitor General, during my discourse assured the committee, they might place the greatest confidence in whatever I advanced, as he had long known me; and, until I went to Belfast, he was sure I was a most honourable lad.

As the committee of the Lords was only a routine of the same business, it is unnecessary here to mention it, except, that for four hours I was with them; by my artifices, I raised in the breast of these hereditary wisdoms the same surprise and fear that I had before in that of the commons; magnifying every report to enhance my own importance.—In consequence of which, they agreed to the Report and Address from the Committee of Secrecy, of the House of Lords, of the 12th May, 1797. *

Three days after the sitting of the committees, I received the following from George Murdoch, hearth collector of Belfast.

"*Belfast, 6th May*, 1797.

"Dear Boys,—Your favours of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of May we received, which gave us much pleasure, since you left this nothing new has turn up, some of the gentry that absconded has returned to the town: Col. Barbour was searching on Thursday for pikes, in Belfast, but was not fortunate in getting any. Let me beg of you to give Col. R. every information you can of what is going on. Enclosed you have Rob. Newell's advertisement; I am told his father is in Belfast. I have just received a letter from the Post-Office, telling me that there is a plot laid to murder me and my two sons, by either day or night, signed, a friend. I still have the highlanders at my house. I wish with all my heart that Robert may get into the artillery. Do you expect that any of the prisoners will be shortly tried. Perhaps if Robert was to see Rowley Osborne, he might get from him where the Belfast cannon is hid. When do you think Belfast will be put out of the peace. Let me beg of you both, to take particular care how you go out at night, as you have numerous enemies, and let me have a few lines every post, that we may know how matters are going on. Mr. Newell's chest was sent here the other day, but sorry am I to say, it was rifled first of its contents, and nothing left in it, but a few pieces of paper; it had been forced open.

"Mrs. Murdoch, Joseph, and family, join me in best wishes for you both; and believe me to be, dear boys, Your ever affectionate,

"GEORGE MURDOCH.

"*Messrs. Newell and Murdoch.*"

Copy of the enclosed advertisement above alluded to.

"I, Robert Newell, jun., apprentice to Mr. Moore Echlin, attorney; having learned with unfeigned concern that my brother, Edward John Newell, miniature painter, has been for some time past, in the practice of going through the town of Belfast, disguised in the dress of a light horse-man, with his face blackened, and accompanied by a guard of soldiers, pointing out certain individuals who have

in consequence been apprehended and put in prison, and that this practice has been repeated night after night, and a number of inhabitants of the town have been so taken up, and confined in barracks and military prisons. Now, howsoever severely I feel the mortification of being driven to publish the misconduct of an unfortunate brother, I think it justice to my own character to express my abhorrence of so unworthy a proceeding. If this unfortunate young man had become fairly acquainted with any fact, which in conscience and honour he thought necessary to public justice to disclose, I should never have censured him either publicly or privately, had he come forward, and been fairly confronted with the accused, but to act the part of a secret and treacherous informer, is to do what in my mind is a violation of every principle of conscience, honour or manhood. This young man has been unluckily disconnected for some years past from his family, and I trust but for this circumstance, he could never have fallen into such company, or such a course of life as he appears to have led. R. Newell, Jun.

"*Great Britain-street, Dublin.*"

The time that this publication, dictated by my father, appeared, Mr. Cooke used every means in his power to raise my exasperation to such a pitch, as to get me to swear against my father. He said he would not, indeed, advise my prosecuting him, but the lying in gaol he richly deserved, and would be a very proper punishment for intermeddling in the affairs of Government. He said he was confident he was an United Irishman, or I could never have been so strong in the principles; and he thought I should have satisfaction, both for his former usage and his present conduct: which, bad however as I was, I declined. But in answer to the above, I published the following:—

"Shocked at my father's duplicity, and his publication signed by my brother, I must beg leave to expose his behaviour to the eyes of a candid and discerning public. When I was last summer in Bel-

fast, I was constantly troubled with his messages through my relations, and letters; condemning me for being connected with United Irishmen, and offering me a reinstatement of his affections *if* I would give up United Irishmen to the justice such rascals merited; these were his own words. Enthusiastic in their cause, I scorned his offered friendship, and stood firm to my ground, confident, from his past unnatural conduct, that not affection or regard for me was his motive for wishing me to act so, but a hope of making himself considered as an active friend of Government. And had not the people of Belfast, by their attempt at murdering me, warranted my proceedings, I would still have continued true to that cause I have always been too much attached to.

"I am confident my father's publication is because he is actuated by fear, knowing I related these particulars to the people of Belfast as regularly as they happened, and lest they should think his unremitting endeavours had at length brought about what he so much desired, might, as they could not hurt me in my own person, take revenge upon him. Likewise, disappointed ambition for not being informed of my reformation, and having, as he wished, the honour of being thought to work it. As to my proceedings since, it was necessary at first to be disguised, that villains might not know who was against them, and by flight to escape the justice their crimes so justly merited. After the second night I never disguised, but walked the streets openly both day and night. As to whether I came fairly or not by my information, will be clearly proved in a court of justice, where every honest man will see the propriety of my conduct. Nor can the disapprobation of a boy, though guided by his father, cast the least reflection on it, nor prevent it being acknowledged, that conscience, honour, and manhood alone actuated me. As to being unluckily disconnected with his family, as he calls it, I think it the most fortunate occurrence of my life; not only from being enabled by my knowledge of things to be an instrument in pre-

venting anarchy and confusion, but also, that I am unconnected with a family whose every act is guided by duplicity, cowardice, and meanness.

"EDWARD JOHN NEWELL.

"*Dublin Castle, May,* 1797."

I at this time had been provided with rooms in the Castle, by Cooke's orders, and under Mr. Dawe's direction, where every luxury was procured with the greatest attention to my pleasure, and every expense, however exorbitant, cheerfully discharged. I daily waited on Cooke, and had every time fresh proof of his kindness, and wish for my ease and happiness. I now gave loose to every debauchery and extravagance, and in a few days had cause to repent of my folly, being confined by that worst of maladies, the fashionable disorder, acquired by improper connections. I had, before I fell ill, applied in favour of Bob Murdoch, to Cooke, who generously granted him a commission. He continued, however, with me. On the 13th of May, I received this letter by Colonel R., being the medium through which I received Murdoch's favours.

"*Belfast,* 11*th May,* 1797.

"Dear Boys,—I received your favour of 8th inst., which gives us all much satisfaction. Pray write me all the news you can collect; and if you send me a *Freeman's Journal* it will be very interesting. How do the prisoners behave? Do they get half a guinea per day. Yesterday Mrs. Murdoch, Mrs. Lewis, and little George were at Durdonel, where they spent the evening: on their coming off, three young men belonging to Belfast came out of Mrs. Mark's, and began to ridicule Mr. Newell, and called him a damned rascal, upon which Mrs. Murdoch immediately jumped off the car, and drew little George's sword, and swore she would run any lubberly rascal through the body that dare speak a disrespectful word of Mr. Newell; and at the same time she desired James to look out, and see if his master and Joseph was coming up, on which they all three ran off as

fast as their legs would carry them. John Shaw is in town, but don't appear: Mrs. Murdoch is getting Mr. Newell's shirts made. Pray when do you both intend to be down? be assured it would make us happy to see you both here. This instant we have received your favour of the 9th inst., for which we return you thanks. I am surprised you would let Robert's publication give you a moment's uneasiness. You may live without your relations; but friends and good neighbours may you never want them. *Are you up?* Pray what is the secret committee doing with Belfast? Will Belfast be put out of the peace? It ought, ere this, to be burned to ashes. On Saturday last seventy-five of the Monaghan militia went down on their knees and asked pardon and mercy, which was granted them; but seventeen of the stiff fellows and ringleaders of the regiment has had a court-martial sitting on them Monday, Tuesday, and yesterday, but as yet nothing has transpired: it is thought two or four of them will be shot, as Corporal Reel has proved that they were to murder all their officers, and give up the several barracks, &c. &c. to their united *damned rascals.* Pray give Colonel R. as much information as you can; he is a rival friend. May the Almighty God give him happy years. Pluck up your spirits, and tell me when you will be down, as your bed and room is ready. Be assured you stand high in Mrs. Murdoch's esteem, and ever shall in your humble servant's: keep it up; who is afraid! let the dogs tremble. We got some things belonging to you from Mrs. Philips. Mrs. Murdoch has cut the piece of muslin into handkerchiefs, which she will have ready, with the shirts, for you against you come here. Mrs. Murdoch will write to Mr. Newell in a post or two. What regiment is Robert to join. Mrs. Murdoch, Mrs. Lewis, Joseph, and the girl, with little George, joins me in love to you both, and wishing you all happiness.

"I am, dear boys, your ever affectionate,

"GEORGE MURDOCH."

Verbatim et literatim.

"P.S.—Let me beg of you not to meddle with your brother Robert on any account. I am certain that before this his own conscience will be punishment enough. Do you or Robert want any thing; if you do, pray advise me. If convenient to you both, I would be glad you would go to Ring's-end, and see Mr. and Mrs. Morgan and their family. I am told he is a guager there. Ask Bob Murdoch if he called and done what Mr. John Johnston ordered him to do. Did you call on Mr. M'Cormock about William Robinson's gun. Be sure and write to us. What is Colonel R.'s opinion now of matters? G. M."

During the time between this and the latter end of July nothing material happened, except my application, agreeable to the desire of my friend, for the liberation of Mr. Davidson, of whom I said every thing favourable that could be possible to say for the dearest friend—and received an agreeable answer. I was, during this time, closely confined to my room, where, by Cooke's orders, attended by Mr. Stewart, the surgeon general, to whose skill and attention I really owe my life. My medicines were all got in Murdoch's name, so fearful was Government of my being poisoned. At this time I received the following letters.

"*Thursday Morning.*

"Mr. Cooke's compliments to Mr. Newell, requests to know, is there any charge against Cleary?"

"*Thursday.*

"Sir,—He was taken up according to your orders of arrest, as I knew him to be an active United Irishman; but there is no oath against him.

"I am, Sir, your very humble servant,

"EDWARD JOHN NEWELL.

"*Edward Cooke, Esq., Dublin Castle.*"

"*Belfast, 8th June,* 1797.

"Dear Newell,—Your letter I received, covering the book per Doctor Atkinson, for which I return you many

thanks. Be assured your not writing has given us much uneasiness. For God's sake, write to us at least every other day; you know I have many things to do that takes up my time; your silence makes us fear you are worse, and every letter we receive gives us much satisfaction. Captain Kingsmall and I differed in opinion, on which he got very far up, and told me to leave the troop, which we both have done. I accused him of cowardice, which he denied; it is, therefore, left to you and Robert to determine. Pray do you recollect his writing to you, Robert, or me, requesting of us to apply to Colonel Barber, to get a guard and take his servant-man, which he dare not; and of his writing us a note, saying, if Mr. Newell knew any thing against the three young Edwards, as they were suspected people, it would be well done to take them up; and at the bottom of his notes he said, burn or destroy this? Colonel Barber has the note relative to taking up his servant, and says he will take care of it. Pray recollect yourselves, and let me have your answers fully to the above, as he shall not dare to treat me with indifference. He wanted the horsemen, after parading, to sit up as a guard on the footmen's arms, which we refused to do; as we told him, if the footmen could not take care of their arms, that if he delivered them up to me, I would put them under my own guard without putting him or Government to a sixpence expense. To this he would not agree; therefore we sent him, yesterday, our regimentals, &c. I wish we had a man of spirit: if we had, we could do business through the country, and not be lolling on a bed in a guard-room. On Monday we had a field-day, and fired in honour of his Majesty's birth-day; and such an illumination never was seen in Belfast, not a croppy dare speak, and all the disaffected had their windows smashed. We chaired General Lake, Colonel Barber, Mr. Fox, &c., through the main street; and, in return, I got a ride. We hear that several men near Newry have been shot and their houses burned, for attacking the army. We long much to see you both; and as this letter is

so very long, it will serve you and Robert for this time. Mrs. Murdoch, Mrs. Lewis, Joseph, Maria, Caroline, Charlotte, and George, desires their love to you, and Mrs. Murdoch says, if you do not write you shall be flogged. Adieu, my boys,

"And believe me to be yours most sincerely,

"GEORGE MURDOCH.

"P.S. I have just received Robert's letters, and the paper, for which we are thankful. Our love to Mr. and Mrs. Morgan and family. We are every day taking up the boys and putting them on board, or sending them to confinement. Cunningham Gregg's house was wrecked, &c.; his furniture underwent a swinging—*are you UP.*"

"*Belfast*, 19*th June*, 1797.

"Dear Boys,—Your favours I received, for which I am much obliged to you, and for the good news you sent me. Yesterday thirty-one United lads came in here prisoners; they are in the artillery barracks. I'm told Rowley Osborne is put in irons. Pray is it so? and what new thing is he guilty of? He well knows where the Belfast cannon is hid. All the country people are coming in to take the oath of allegiance. Captain Lewis arrived here last night. Is Bob in possession of his commission yet? if so, what is it, and in what regiment? Is there any word of your getting down, my lads? Be assured we long to see you here. Mrs. Murdoch and family joins in love to you, Edward and Robert, Mr. and Mrs. Morgan and family. And believe me to be,

"Dear Boys, yours affectionately,

"G. MURDOCH.

"*Messrs. Newell and Murdoch.*"

"*Belfast, July 4th*, 1797.

"Dear Sir,—Yours came to hand of the 27th June, when I was in Newry. In your observations I firmly acquiesce; gratitude can never be looked for, where it never had the smallest foundation; and a revenge of the like tendency to our protectors, must proceed from

black and rancorous minds. As to an observation of your's, that the person's punishment was not adequate to the crime, no one felt themselves more hurt than I did, at the sudden forgiveness, and according to your opinion, as if it proceeded from your pen, as well as from my lips. I declare it to be an interlude to a repetition of the same offence; if she has the least spark of feeling, it ought to bring her to a sense of her duty to her, whose only wish is for her to conduct herself becoming the connexion which she has with the best of families. It was owing to Joseph's indisposition, and intercession to his indulgent parents for her return, which made them consent to her return, though with reluctance. Mrs. Murdoch's arm is very black and very sore; and Mrs. Murdoch, to prevent company suspecting any misunderstanding, may speak to her, but is determined not otherwise.

"If you, dear friend, knew how ungrateful she was to me, when a mistaken pity induced me to say things in her behalf, when she was in a former disgrace, she availed herself of a moment's shyness between Mrs. Murdoch and me, which proceeded from the circumstances above mentioned; the poor cut throat said in private to Mrs. Murdoch, that I had endeavoured to ingratiate myself in her esteem; but in a language similar to this, that she was proof against my pretended friendship; she did not go untold of it; we all consider ourselves obliged to you for our existence. I and the family will never forget the obligation, for in the existence of my dear wife depends my own. Bob is an idle vagabond, or he would have wrote to me. Tell him so. Which neglect, in fact, does not prevent me sending my love to him.

"With the best respects to you from the whole of the family, remaining, yours, sincerely,

"William Lewis.

"P.S. I am in a hurry, dinner is dished, and I am hungry."

"*Belfast, 22nd July*, 1797.

"Dear Boys,—I received Robert's of 15th instant, and would have answered it in course, but in hourly expectation of seeing you both here. Thank God, Joseph is recovering. All the rest of the family are well; but by no means let Robert and you part, but come together when you get permission, and do not stir without it. When you get leave to come down write to me, and I will meet you at Newry, Banbridge, or Hillsborough; the last letter I wrote you was returned to Newry, which I received from Colonel Ross, where I was attending our friends who were duly elected on Wednesday last, and I did not know where or how to direct to you; as to Robert's commission, let it come in course and he will save by so doing, but do not disoblige your friends at the Castle. Does Mrs. Morgan call on you now; Mrs. Murdoch and family joins me in love to you both and wishing you safe here—still keep up the guard of five men—none of the croppies dare stir. Write to me by return of post.

"I am, my dear boys,

"Your affectionate friend, &c.

"George Murdoch.

"*Mr. Edward John Newell.*"

On my recovery, I applied to go down to Belfast, as the Murdochs had so often invited me. I signed my name to Mr. Watkin's bills, who was the person appointed by Government to provide me with breakfast, dinner, supper, wines, jellies, &c.

The bill for May, odds of	£38	0	0
Do. June, upwards of	50	0	0
Do. July, about	72	0	9

I had liberty of inviting any person to see me; in the course of this time I had also received above fifty pounds to buy clothes, and more for other purposes: and were I to state the doctor's, apothecary's and other bills which were paid for me, the sums would hardly be credited.

The day before I left town, I in the street arrested Mr. Carmentrang, the gentleman mentioned in the examinations, who not choosing to gratify Government with his knowledge of the business, was crammed aboard a tender, and never since heard of.

Having received twenty guineas from Cooke, and a desire to write whenever I wanted any more, I set off for Belfast, accompanied by my aid-de-camp, Ensign Murdoch. On my arrival at Fort George, I was received with the greatest friendship; and, in the course of a few days, had the honour of being waited on by almost all the principal supporters of our Holy Church and State, in that part of the kingdom, to congratulate me on my recovery and arrival in the country, and to inform me, that many of those, for whom I had formerly been searching, were returned to their wives and families, and could now be easily laid hold of.

At that time, I lived in the habits of the most endearing intimacy with the Murdoch family; there was no liberty thought too great for me to take, nor any favour too great to bestow on me.

On the 23rd of August, I received the following letter in answer to one I had written to Mr. Dawes, and which may serve as a specimen of many I have received upon the same purpose.

"*Dublin, August 23rd*, 1797.

"Dear Sir,—I received yours of the 18th instant, and was happy to hear that you and Mr. M. were well. Agreeable to your directions, I waited on Mr. C—— and he gave me a ten guinea note, which I enclose you; there is no particular news in town, we are all very well. Give my best respects to Mr. M———, and believe me to be,

"Your very humble servant,

"*Mr. Edward John Newell.* S. D."

This letter is endorsed, "*Dawes*, Ten Guineas."

Never suspecting these letters would appear in print, the correspondence that took place has not,

of course, been entirely preserved; and it is even by chance, that the few here laid before the public were not also destroyed, and which are far from being the most interesting. About this time a man of the name of Martin came to me to draw examinations against Charles Rankin, Esq., and some others, for high treason. Those examinations, by Mr. Rankin's interest, when offered to be sworn before Colonel Barber, neither he nor General Lake would admit to be done. I therefore enclosed the examinations in a letter, of which the following is a copy, to Lord Carhampton and also to Mr. Cooke:

"My Lord,—Conscious as I am, that there are no persons who exert themselves more to detect treason or who wishes more totally to destroy it, I take the liberty of addressing your Lordship, confident that riches or power will never bias your Lordship where duty calls, and to lay before you the examinations of a poor man, against a man of property, who because the poor man embraced the proposals held out by the proclamation for a return of allegiance, has ever since done his utmost to ruin the man. Mr. Rankin, every person about the country knows to be a strict republican, and I have often heard him talked of in our societies, as a most active one. I am confident of the propriety of this part of the examinations which says 'he was the cause of numbers being united.' I have the pikes mentioned; and I am sure should it please your lordship, that the arresting of Mr. Rankin, and his servant M'Connell, would be of the utmost service to this part of the country. Should it be your lordship's pleasure, and if you would honour me by the charge, your lordship shall find me always willing and determined in doing my duty.

"And am, my Lord, with every respect

"Your Lordship's ever greatly obliged

"Very humble servant,

"Edw. John Newell.

"*Belfast, Sept.* 15*th* 1797.

"To Lord Carhampton, Commander in Chief," &c.

On account of the jealousy which clearly showed itself towards me, by Mr. Murdoch's suspicion of a connexion between one of his family and me, I wrote to Cooke, that I thought it necessary, and wished to return to Dublin. I some time after received the following answer :—

"*Dublin Castle, 30th Sept.* 1797.

"Sir,—I received only yesterday your letter of the 19th, and enclose you ten pounds that you may come up to town without delay, which by your own account seems necessary. Colonel Barber will assist you in your coming hither; when you arrive I will have the pleasure of conversing with you on the subject of the examinations which you inclosed.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient and humble servant,

"E. Cooke.

"*Mr. Edward Newell.*"

In the latter end of October, I set off for Dublin, having first received from Colonel Barber twenty-four guineas, in addition to several prior sums.

Murdoch and his son Bob also accompanied me as evidences in my favour, and were I to search the world I could not have a better; for so willing was he to serve me, that he desired me on the journey to write out what I wished him to swear, and he would get it by heart and do so, let it be what it would, to assist me.

In Newry I met Mr. John Hughes, whom Colonel Barber had desired me if I could by any chance meet with to arrest; him, therefore, I made a prisoner, though I had no warrant or authority whatsoever for so doing, but the direction of Colonel Barber, and sent him under a strong guard to Belfast. The crimes alleged against him, his exertions to save the life of Orr! The next night I arrived in Dublin, accompanied by three others.

The 2nd of November, I received the following answer to a letter I had written upon the business :

"My dear Friend,—I had the pleasure of receiving your kind favour, for which I thank you. As to the inquest of Connell, a militia man in the City of Limerick corps, I gave the papers to Mr. Bristow; but I recollect the most of the jurors; the foreman was Dr. Gelston, nex *Alexr. Gordon*, Jas. Alderdice, nex Dr. Shephard, Richd. Moore, Jas. Kirkwood; as to the rest I am not sure. The verdict was 'accidental death,' which at the time they gave it in I thought to be false; however, let that be for a future day. I hope to see you on Saturday next, and then may tell you something more about it. Make my compliments to Mrs. Murdoch, and believe me to be, dear Sir, yours truly,

"William Atkinson.

"*Belfast, October 31st*, 1797."

Verbatim et literatim.

On my arrival, Cooke and Kemmis severally applied to me to assist Bird in the prosecuting of Messrs. Kennedy, Shanaghan, &c., which I positively refused, and replied, that was I brought forward, from what I knew of Bird's character, my evidence would tend to injure rather than serve his testimony. The 3rd of November, Mr. Parroch and Mr. Robert Orr, of Belfast, passed through the Castle-yard, and as it was known they were principal exculpatory evidence against Bird, I informed him of the circumstance,—he seemed greatly alarmed, and at his request I dogged them to Mr. Dowling's their attorney; and also brought Major Sirr to Bird, having first left Mr. Dawes, the king's messenger, to watch where they should proceed to, from that. When we arrived at Bird's room, he assured Sirr that they were most material evidence against him, and that if there were not some method taken to keep them out of the way, he would be ruined; I mentioned to Sirr that the best way would be to arrest them on suspicion, and keep them by until the trials would be over, and that I was confident they would be too much rejoiced at their enlargement to inquire the cause of their deten-

tion; fearful their inquisitiveness might be a means of having it prolonged.—Sirr said it would be a great stretch of power, but the circumstance warranted it, and I, though I detested Bird, was willing to execute it. Orr, I could take on suspicion of being an United Irishman, but, Parroch's character is too well known to be arrested on that charge. Bird said both he and his wife could swear robbery against him, particularly the stealing of a pocket-book. Sirr and I that night searched the north country inns, for to take them; but not meeting with them, and the trials being next morning postponed, the business dropped.

Dutton the Newry informer, having a recommendation to me from a gentleman of that town, called to see me, and a few days after our acquaintance, Dutton was arrested at the suit of Mr. Ogle; fearful he might receive insult, I brought a guard with me to the courts and sheriff's office to prevent it; he was not liberated above an hour when he was taken upon a second charge of the same gentleman's,—and I was obliged to get Mr. Kemmis to bail him.

On the 8th of November I received the following

"*Belfast, 6th November,* 1797.

"Dear Edward,—I arrived here on Thursday night, and found all the family well, except Joseph, who still continues poorly. At Banbridge I met the brave Col. Barber, Doctor Atkinson, &c., posting for Dublin. On Saturday morning I received your letter with the subpœna. I served Mrs. Boyd, and will serve Francis Obre this day. He and the family are removed to Lisburn. Please God, I shall post it up, as the coach is taken every day to the 14th inst. Captain Rankin is gone up, so is two Farguson's, brothers to Farguson of Smithfield. As jurors object to them all, as also Mr. Lepper, and John Hastings.—All here is quiet.—No word of Magee, that I can depend on.—Mr. and Mrs. Phillips are well.—James has inlisted with Col. Barber.—Let Robert get a coat and breeches made, and I will be

with you on Thursday, and give him cash to pay for them, &c.——Mrs. Murdoch's eyes are very bad—as soon as she is well she will answer your letter. She and family joins me in love to you and Robert.—Please to give my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Campbell; and believe me to be, Dear Edward,

"Yours truly,

"GEORGE MURDOCH.

"My best respects to Mr. Dawes and son."

The night old Murdoch arrived in town, I had the honour of his company at my apartments at the Castle; Dutton, old and young Murdoch, Obre, Morgan and Jameson, all of which during my stay lived with me, where I entertained them in the first style of elegance. After dinner, &c., we repaired to Mrs. Beatie's, where we spent the night in wine and debauchery. *

The rapidly increasing circulation of the *Press*, soon almost as it was established, gave considerable alarm to administration, by the publication of those atrocious acts which were universally suspected to have been perpetrated with the connivance, but to my knowledge, with the warmest approbation of ——, &c. * It therefore became a matter of the last importance to put it down, and happening one evening over a bottle, to mention to Major Sirr, that I had about two years since repeatedly seen the printer, Mr. Finnerty, at several public places in this city, where I remarked he talked with freedom on any questions that occurred; immediately Sirr suggested to me the propriety of swearing against him, and as defenderism was the rage of that day, I was furnished with means sufficiently probable. Accordingly the following examinations were drawn up, which in case of his acquittal of the libel, for which he was then a prisoner, and shortly to be tried, I was to have sworn.

"*County of Dublin.* } The examinations of Ed. John Newell, of said city, miniature painter, who being

sworn on the Holy Evangelists, and duly examined before one of his Majesty's justices of the peace for the said county,

"Saith, That about two years ago or better he became acquainted with Peter Finnerty, of said city, printer, with whom he formed an intimacy; that some time after being several times together in the house of —— Mathews, a publican, in Dame-court, he the said Peter Finnerty introduced the subject of defenderism; which finding was agreeable to exam. he proposed to exam. to become one; that after some discourse on the subject, he exam. gave him the sign of a defender, which Finnerty answered, and seemed much and agreeably surprised, saying he by no means suspected he was a friend, and wondered he had not before known it. He told exam. that he was secretary to a society of defenders, showed him a list of names, and invited exam. to come the next night of meeting, which he intended holding at the said Mathews', in Dame-court. That he went to Mathews' on the time appointed, and there seen the said Mathews refuse to let Finnerty and his party have a private room, that they then left the house, and exam. stayed there being ashamed to go with the men who then accompanied the said Finnerty.

"*Nov.*, 1797."

As there was no business to be on the cloth this term, after a fortnight's stay, the expense of which I am confident was above a hundred guineas to Government, we determined returning to the north; I therefore received from Mr. Taylor, Mr. Cooke's chief-clerk, he being then in England, ten guineas for travelling expenses; seven guineas from Mr. Kemmis, and, as it was impossible to get more until Mr. Cooke's return, I applied to Mr. Barber, who, with the utmost kindness, gave me ten guineas more on my giving him a receipt, as if I had received it before I left Belfast, he having no leave to give me money in Dublin.

Before Cooke went to England he assured me that

according to his promise he procured for me a commission in the horse; that he got it out in another name, confident I would not wish to continue my own, but that he thought it better not to put me in possession of it then, as I might be questioned about it on the trials.

When I returned to Murdoch's, the same friendship and scenes of felicity continued; and on the 18th of Nov. I received the following production, of that champion of religion, and good government, and of which the town and neighbourhood of Newry can bear testimony—Dutton.

"*Dublin Castle*, 16*th Nov.* 1797.

"Dear Brother,—I beg leave to acquaint you that I arrived here last night. There appears nothing in the *Press* either with or against us, therefore I don't think worth while to send it. Should any new thing make its appearance in the paper of this night, I shall send it to-morrow night, that is to say, if I do not sail for England before that. Mr. Kemmis, who I saw last night, tells me there is no less than five writs out against me, therefore you may well suppose if they should once lay hold of your celebrated brother, he will be as happy as if the devil had him. I would be glad you would write to me to Emeral-house, Wrixham, near Chester; and let me know what you are up to. My best respects to the Mr. Murdochs; I hope when I return from England, they will be able to put me in the way of earning a couple of hundreds; this they can't be off doing if they wish to befriend me, for they must reasonably suppose that poor Dutton can't carry on all those lawsuits without a great deal of cash. And where in the name of —— is he to get it. I hope none of his friends would wish him to be hanged for robbing the mail coach, or breaking into some of the banks. ———— tell them to think upon this business; they have until the 9th of next month. Reflect upon it, and absolutely they might as well be guilty of murder as to neglect it; for I must see my council, and then you

know there is another expense which I have not mentioned— * * * * and I beg leave to subscribe myself,

"Your most affectionate and celebrated brother,

"FRED. DUTTON.

"P.S. I am now at Smith's, writing, and if you'd see his hair standing strait up on his head, you'd laugh, at my telling him the danger he must be in, when he comes into court to give in evidence, as I tell him there is a probability that some one or other may absolutely have the boldness to shoot him in open court; he firmly believes it will be the case.

"*Lieut. E. J. Newell, Esq., 9th Light Dragoons, Belfast.*"

On the 20th of Nov., I received this by the name agreed on before by Cooke.

"*Dublin Castle, 18th Nov.*, 1797.

"Mr. Cooke requests Mr. Newell will be kind enough to state what there is against A. Kennedy. He fled and is applying to be admitted to take oaths, &c.

"*Mr. John Ramsey, at Mr. Murdoch's, Hearth-collector, Belfast.*"

Franked, Wm. Taylor.

To which I wrote the following answer:

"*Fort St. George, 21st Nov.*, 1797.

"Sir,—I received a letter of yours desiring a statement of facts against A. Kennedy; of his United principles I had no knowledge until I became a military officer, in which capacity I also met him in military company; he must therefore have been very active, or he would not arrive at that honour. I after understood that he had been the principal and most active agent that had ever gone to the camp, and that he had made more soldiers United than any other man in this province. I know him to be a young man of most insinuating address, and a steady republican; and if I dare advise, it would be, not to accept

of his oaths, as they would be only for a cloak. I see already the use that those who have been admitted to those liberties, and to bail, are making of them, and I really fear Government will have cause to repent their lenity.

"I am, Sir, &c., &c.,
"E. J. NEWELL."

On Saturday, the 2nd of Dec., on account of examinations sworn before Gen. Lake, I received the following warrant:

"*County of Down.* } In consequence of examinations lodged before me this day upon oath, against Wm. Robinson, of the parish of Holywood, and county aforesaid, farmer; These are therefore in his Majesty's name, to command you to apprehend the said Wm. Robinson, and bring him before me, or any other of his Majesty's justices of the peace, for said county, to be dealt with according to law. Given under my hand, this 2nd Dec. 1797, seven.

(Seal.) "G. LAKE."

And also a mittimus.

About nine o'clock that evening, accompanied by Bob Murdoch, I went with a party of troopers and arrested him, and, according to directions, brought away whatever arms I could find; viz. two guns, three pistols, one sword, belt, powder-horn, &c. We kept him prisoner at Murdoch's until next morning, when I sent him off with a party of dragoons to Down gaol.

That night, as we had every liberty, it being a proclaimed county, Murdoch and I searched several houses for arms, &c., racking everything, burning and destroying at pleasure, treating the inhabitants with such brutality, that some women on account of it fell into violent and dangerous convulsions.

One man in particular, of the name of M'Camon, whose door being shut, we forced open; dragged him and his wife from their bed; destroying everything that came in our hands, trying for arms, while the wretched

inmates stood almost naked, trembling with the apprehension of immediate destruction from the ferocity of the soldiers, who constantly abused them for not informing where the arms and papers, of which, as they said, we had information; and on continuance of refusal of confession, would have *set fire* to the house, but that I was restrained by pity from the pleadings of an old distressed woman, and prevented the completion of it. When tired of this virtuous and noble amusement, we retired, to drown in drink and exultation—our villany, the terrors of darkness, and any thought of regret that should chance to occur for the atrocious barbarity of our conduct.

On the 6th I received the following note:

"*Belfast, Dec.* 6, 1797.

"Dear Sir,—Until I receive small notes for a large bill I have to discount, I cannot at present send you more than *nine guineas.*

"Please to send a receipt for 11*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* which includes the guinea you had from me on Sunday.

"It is unnecessary to interfere or employ soldiers of another corps, therefore must beg to be excused applying for one of the 22nd, to instruct you in the sword exercise, as I really am not intimate enough with the officer commanding there, to take on me to ask such a request.

"And am, Sir,

"Your very humble servant,

"*Mr. Edward John Newell.* L. BARBER.

"P.S. The bearer will hand you your receipt."

As Mr. Bird has taken the liberty of writing of me in a most unwarrantable style, as one of the most blood-thirsty cannibals, I must say, reflection should show him how maliciously false is the charge. Bird was an informer from sentiment; he made it his private profession, and was supported in it by Government, to whom he had applied for employment, and proved his abilities to be one. He stole into the confidence of men, he insinuated himself into

their good graces, that he might know their sentiments, and turn them to their ruin and his profit. He was, however, detected in his scheme, and publicly branded with the title he deserved. Who, then, merits the character with which he distinguished me? He that traded on the lives of his fellow-creatures, bartered their safety and existence for gold,—who could, with seeming friendship, sit and smile in the face of the very man whose ruin he laboured to accomplish; or I, who, drove by passion, was led to improprieties, roused to revenge by an unjust suspicion? Surely he best deserves it. He coolly premeditated crimes; I only committed them. He was a villain by design; I only by accident. As to his assertion of never intending to come forward to prosecute, I can say it is a most infernal falsehood. He was determined, he was prepared, he got himself drilled by K. for the business. Dutton and I went there with him, his cowardice not allowing him to go alone; he also applied to me to assist him on the trial, and on my refusal, got Cooke and K. to use their influence with me for that purpose, but with the like success. These are facts; the whole battalion of which he was the founder, can bear testimony, as well as Cooke and K.

Whether he considered me so base a character, his letters will show. This one I received, December 13, signed by his then name of Smith, enclosed as follows:

"Sir,—The within came inclosed to me, from Mr. Smith, by last night's post.

"And am, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"L. Barber.

"*Mr. Newell, Wednesday morning, Dec.* 13, 1797."

"Dear Sir,—The woman you lodged with in Castle-yard has treated me in a manner so vile and atrocious, that I am at a loss which most to admire, her assurance, or her inventive faculty; for such I think

must be the assertion she made, when she said, 'you had sent her letters against me;' for I am unwilling, even for a moment, to suppose you guilty of such a dereliction of honour. I assure you, sir, this abandoned wretch (Mrs. Campbell) told Dutton, we were a set of rascals, &c. That she knew us and would expose us. She —— Mr. Cooke and the Government to —— in a lump; and swore again, in presence of a crowd, that we were a gang of thieves, robbers, &c., and she would expose us. She was so profuse of her compliments to Dutton, that he made a very early retreat, unable to stand or stem the torrent of abuse she heaped on us. Now, Mr. Newell, I leave it to your sagacity to discover this lady's meaning, when she called us a set of robbers, &c. Could she mean me—solo? surely not! Could it be me and Dutton? We were merely a duet. Was it yourself, as well as us, that formed a trio? Indeed she certainly must inclose you in the gang of thieves she so pathetically described.

"I will allow that the lady might be under the command of the potent Captain Whisky, or the more potent Usquebagh. But be that as it may, I am seriously resolved to punish the scurrilous wretch, as far as the law permits. But at the same time, I cannot suppress my inclination of stating her conduct to you, who I think more deeply involved by her abuse than myself, as the creature's knowledge of me must be infinitely too small to occasion such expressions; nor is my determination of punishing her to the extremity of justice, lessened by her subsequent conduct, as she boasts of having your protection!!! I cannot suppose it possible it can be so—she merits your most indignant scorn; and I have, Newell, much too good an opinion of you, to suppose you could descend to countenance so abandoned a woman. But as she has publicly declared 'she could produce letters from Newell against me, and would show them,' I write merely to give you an opportunity of con-

tradicting her assertions; for as I before told you, I cannot for a moment suppose you could be capable of an action so truly wretched and contemptible.

"I hope Messrs. Murdoch and yourself are well.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your most respectful and very humble servant,

"J. SMITH.

"N.B. I beg the favour of an answer, directed under cover to Mrs. Morris, No. 5, Buckridge-court, G. Ship-street.—December 11, 1797."

I answered this letter as it deserved, with a disbelief of its contents, knowing the person mentioned had no cause for such a report, or to abuse me; and one who had ever attended me with the greatest care and attention, and at whose request I wrote to Cooke and Mr. William J. Skeffington in her favour, as Smith had tried to injure her; she succeeded in spite of his complaints.

For this time nothing material happened. I enjoyed every diversion the town and country could afford, and the esteem of the Murdochs, except his jealousy began to increase. The following I received the 14th of December:

"Mr. Taylor would have answered Mr. N—'s letter long ago, but he was obliged to wait for Mr. Cooke's directions."

And enclosing the following:

"*Castle, December* 11, 1797.

"Dear Sir,—I send you 20*l.* I fear you may think I had forgot you, which was not the case, but I have been much hurried and fatigued. I am glad to find you are as active as ever.

"Your faithful, &c.,

"*E. Newell, Esq.* E. COOKE."

Some days following I was sent for by Colonel Barber, to attend him at his own house, where I met with him and big Moore, the sub-sheriff; they

produced to me a long list of names, who they said were summoned to attend in Dublin as jurors; which I was to examine, and mark each name I knew or should dislike. I did mark some, the colonel a good many, with the assistance of the sheriff. Colonel Barber told me it was necessary the lawyers should know what men might be depended on to give a verdict in favour of my evidence; and notwithstanding which, Mr. Barber, on the 24th of January, deliberately swore in the King's Bench, that he never assisted to pack the panel. Some time before the November term, little Atkinson, and a young man of the name of Moore, who I was told was an under-sheriff, waited on me at my apartments in the Castle, for the same purpose.

Murdoch's jealousy now caused him to use Mrs. Murdoch with such cruelty, that, unwilling to be the cause of uneasiness to one I so truly esteemed, I removed from Murdoch's; I reasoned with him about his treatment, and assured him he had no grounds for to warrant it; he, however, insisted I should return to his house, with which I after some days complied.

Day after day his severities increased, and in such a manner as showed him to be devoid of all sense of shame or decency; and that human nature never was so disgraced as in this most infamous of mankind. A constant continuance of this outrage at length forced her to seek elsewhere that peace she was denied at home.

On the 16th of January, I received from Colonel Barber fifteen guineas, and on the 20th, ten; I also received a letter from Mr. Cooke, requesting my immediate attendance in Dublin, and referring me to the collector of Belfast for any money I might want, which letter is in Mr. Skeffington's hands, and by his order Mr. Salmon gave me twenty guineas. On Sunday, the 21st of Jan., having received the following order, I set off for Dublin, where I arrived on the next evening, being accompanied by Mr. Francis Obre, as an assistant evidence.

"*Belfast*, 16*th Jan.*, 1798.

"Sir,—I am directed by Lieutenant-General Lake to desire you will give the necessary orders for a non-commissioned officer and five mounted dragoons to escort the bearer, Mr. Newell, from Belfast to Dublin; who must likewise be provided with a dragoon horse, to be returned at Lisburn, Banbridge, Newry, Dundalk, and Drogheda.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient, humble servant,

"Wm. Nicholson,

"———————— *Aid-de-camp.*

"*Officer commanding the garrison, Belfast.*"

Next day old Murdoch came to town, and after some hot words, which I, on account of his being drunk, took no notice of, he called on me the following morning, and requested I would think nothing of what had passed, as he was willing to bury all in oblivion; as he would not give the United rascals the satisfaction of thinking we had fallen out. This dispute had on me a different effect, and, for the first time, I began to feel remorse. I next morning went to the courts; I ready and in waiting with the utmost painful anxiety for the moment when I should be called to the table. The satisfaction I experienced on the trials being put off, can only be conceived by one in the same situation. I trusted that during the long vacation, something would turn up to prevent my being obliged to swear away the life of any person: my hope has been agreeably and happily realized.

During that week I made it my business to frequent an inn where several of the Northerns lodged; their behaviour, which was friendly, struck me; and I determined to go on Sunday to see the prisoners in Kilmainham, which I did. There did these worthy sons of their country forget my being the cause of their confinement, and received me as if I had still been what I once was. But believe me, I did not attempt to visit those who I then intended to prose-

cute, though the generous fellows were willing to lay aside every thing, and, while I staid there, received me as a friend. No! bad even as I was, I could not meet in friendship the men I had determined to injure. *

I determined no longer to be a tool, but to return to the principles, of which deserting had been the cause of all my misery. All the flattering prospects which Government had placed before my eyes vanished before the reward which would await upon this conduct,—happiness, peace of mind, confidence in the propriety of my behaviour, the forgiveness of those I had injured, and the hopes of once more being considered an honest man.

All this time Murdoch lived with me in the greatest friendship; we eat, drank, went to every diversion, arm and arm walked the streets: nevertheless, some friends informed me, that Murdoch, on being checked by some for being seen with me, who had so injured the credit of the family, had assured them, that he only waited for an opportunity to destroy me, and his show of friendship was for that purpose. I upbraided him with it. In the course of the business he informed me, that if ever I came to the north, three persons there had sworn to murder me, or fall in the attempt. I proved to him how little I valued the threat, and the business for this time stopped. But, in the evening of Sunday, January 28th, I having dined out, on my return home found Murdoch waiting supper for me, and was uneasy I could not sup, from being unwell. When I had stripped myself and was stepping into bed, he drew a pistol from his pocket and snapped it at my head; I therefore sent him to the guard-house, and next morning lodged examinations against him, who, from being the cause of my being an informer, I now doubly detested, and that evening lodged him in Newgate, where he enjoyed a refinement of misery, as some letters written by his wife to me, had been taken out of a trunk of mine, the other contents of which had been destroyed. I wish to clear myself of the charge

of sending them to him. No! though I would wish to punish him, it should not have been in that manner, and had I known it, he never should have seen them.

On Sunday night, the 4th of February, on returning to my lodgings in the Castle, the sentry refused me admittance, which I insisting on, he made a push at me with his bayonet, which I threw up, and received through my hat the stab that, which I suppose, was intended for my heart. A very serious scuffle ensued, during which I discharged two pistols at him, for which I was carried to the guard-room, where having used some warm expressions and altercation with the officers, Mr. Watson interfered, and had me removed to my own rooms, where I was guarded, until ordered, next day, to be liberated.

On waiting on Mr. Cooke, he spoke to me rather warmly about my behaviour, and the sentiments I had used in the guard-room, and wondered how, after becoming an Orangeman, I could retain such rebellious notions. I assured him I was not yet an Orangeman; though on being solicited by Dr. Atkinson, I promised to become one after the trials. He seemed very angry at my having so long neglected so necessary a qualification; told me I did not rightly consider my obligations to Government, for almost any other man would have been hanged who would dare to fire at a sentinel.

Even this great favour could not drive from my mind the determination I had formed of retiring from the paths of iniquity. I therefore wrote the following letter to a gentleman of popular character:

"*Dublin Castle, Feb. 6th*, 1798.

"Sir,—From the confidence I have in your honour, and the knowledge I have of your character, I address you, though I never had the happiness of your intimate acquaintance, to inform you, that from the constant examples of the perfidy of Government that are in my eyes—from what I suffer in my own mind—from the recollection of my own improprieties—

from the manner I see myself despised by honest men, and the sensations I feel from my exposure in print, I am heartily sorry for my past conduct, and wish, through you, the people to be informed of it; and that if they will again receive me into favour and forgiveness, they shall never have cause to be sorry for it; and though I know the injuries I have done them to be great, I think I can make some restitution, by the exposure of the plans of Government, in which I have been connected.

"And am, Sir, your very humble servant,

"EDW. JOHN NEWELL."

I on the next day received this answer:

"*Belfast Hotel, Feb. 7.*

"Sir,—I received yours of yesterday, and shall not fail to make known your intentions to such as I associate with. And from what I know of the forgiving disposition of the people, I think myself justified in saying they would feel more real satisfaction in the forgiving of a penitent, than in the punishing an offender.

"Yours, &c.

"*Mr. Edw. John Newell, Dublin Castle.*"

During this time, I lived even in greater extravagance than before; having continually large parties banqueting with me in the Castle, keeping also horses, attendants, &c. *

Determined, however, to put my plan of elopement into execution, I applied to Mr. Cooke to send me to England, which he agreed to, fixing Worcester as my place of residence, where I was to take upon me the name of Johnston, and seem to follow the miniature painting, but should be regularly supplied from Government with whatever money I should write for; he desired my departure to be delayed for a few days; but uneasy at my detention, on Thursday 15th I wrote the following:

"Sir,—As you have not settled with yourself

about my immediately going to England, I write to inform you, that so uneasy is my state of mind from the reports that I hear, that if you choose not immediately to let me depart, I shall go off of myself, and depend on my business for support rather than endure what I at present suffer. Nevertheless, I shall constantly acquaint you with the place of my abode, and shall ever be ready to contribute all in my power for the welfare of Government.

" Sir, &c., yours, &c.

" Edward John Newell.

" *Edward Cooke, Esq.*"

Which was answered in less than an hour.

" Mr. Cooke's compliments to Mr. Newell, he has spoke on the subject of his wishes, and he may go to England. Mr. Cooke wishes to see Mr. Newell to-morrow morning.

" *Castle, Thursday.*"

I waited on him the next day for the last time, and on my taking leave, received from him fifty guineas, with direction to write and give him every information of occurrences, and about ten o'clock that night I took leave of the Castle, and bid a long adieu to all my greatness; and here put an end to a life of upwards of ten months, which was fraught with every scene of infamy, luxury, and debauchery, during which I must have cost the Government a sum of no less than two thousand pounds, as a reward for having in that short time been the cause of confining 227 innocent men to languish in either the cell of a bastile, or the hold of a tender; and, as I have heard, has been the cause of many of their deaths; as also for having been the cause of upwards of 300 having fled from their habitations, their families, and industry, to hide in the mountains, or seek for safety in some distant land; and as I was the first who informed against any of the military, by the taking up of Real, who was terrified into our measures, until he informed

on the rest of the Monaghan regiment, and prosecuted the four brave men who were shot at Blaris camp, and whose blood must lie on my head; and many other crimes, for which my future life, I fear, will never be able to atone.

Shortly after my departure, I sent the following letter to Mr. M'Guckin, attorney, enclosing one to the prisoners:

"Sir,—From my knowledge of your political character and exertions in favour of the prisoners, I take the liberty of requesting you to lay before them the enclosed letter, and as a man whose goodness of heart will lead you to pity the frailty of human nature, that you will use your influence in my favour to gain their forgiveness, which, from their generous behaviour to me in my visits to their prison, I trust not to be disappointed in; their kindness there first brought me to a thorough sense of my duty, their pardon will be the confirmation of my adherence to it. Assure them, they having nothing further to fear from me; worlds would not now bribe me to a continuance of my former improprieties, and, could life purchase a forgetfulness of my past unnatural conduct, with pleasure would I pay the forfeit. I enclose you a list of all the prisoners who have been taken in Belfast and vicinity, upon the common charge of treason, copied from one given me by General Barber, and I remark at the bottom those against whom there is nothing but suspicion: your good sense will show you the use that may be made of it; and am, sir, with every respect,

"Your very humble servant,

"Edward John Newell.

"*James M'Guckin, Esq.*"

"To Messrs. Gordon, Barrett, and Burnside, &c.
Kilmainham Gaol.

"From you, whose steady and persevering conduct in the cause of humanity does honour both to your-

selves and those with whom you are connected, and convinces the world how worthy *you* are of the confidence your countrymen have placed in you; to you who have suffered with pleasure in the horrors of a dungeon a long and close confinement, do I, who have been the cause of that confinement, dare to plead for forgiveness, because I know the generous philanthropy of your hearts. I can offer no other extenuation of the injuries I have done you than that I was instigated by anger and revenge. Enraged by the suspicions that were entertained of me when I was *really* honest, and knowing the punishment to which these suspicions exposed me, I resolved to take vengeance for the injuries I received. I became an informer: a false shame for a while prevented my return to honesty and truth. Did you know how galling it is to be suspected when undeserving—did you know, and it is the truth, that though I could not withstand suspicion or insult, I had *died* with pleasure for the cause; and that the being thought unworthy of the confidence reposed in me made life so invaluable to me, that desperation ensued, and drove me to those crimes which, though I wish, I fear never can be atoned for,—I am sure you would pity more than condemn the act, though the continuance in iniquity deserves no mercy. I rely on your goodness, and hope the proof I shall give of my sincere repentance, by the exposure of Government, and a life devoted to the service of my country, will partly atone for me, and make me again worthy of your esteem and confidence;

"And remain, &c.

"Edward John Newell."

Having got out of the reach of my enemies, and finding myself once more comfortable amongst some of my old acquaintances, who had by mere good luck escaped sharing the same fate of the rest, and who I highly entertained, relating to them several exploits, opinions, fears, and inquiries of the conductors of Government; informing them of the many modes

by which they got their informations, who the different private informers were, some of which they had never suspected; as also the manner that business was conducted at the *post-office*.

On the 23rd of February, I wrote four letters, one to the Lord Lieutenant, one to Mr. Cooke, one to General Barber, and one to Mr. Watson, private secretary to the Lord Lieutenant; and which were delivered to them by a friend of mine, and the copies left for insertion in the *Press*, and of course carried off at the ransacking of that office. I shall, however, attempt to give a sketch of the one to his Excellency, from memory, and Mr. Cooke's as it appeared in print:—

"My Lord,—After having been so long a time an inmate of yours at the Castle, it would be the height of ingratitude in me to take leave without returning my most sincere thanks for the many marks of attention and uncommon kindness conferred upon me; and for the *fifty guineas* which I received on Saturday. I beg leave to give you a piece of the most important and really the truest information you ever received from me, and that is, to follow my example and decamp. *

"For your free and gracious pardon for every act which I committed previous to my becoming an informer, I beg leave to return you my sincere thanks, and you may rest assured that I will carefully preserve it. Wishing therefore your Lordship a long and final adieu,

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"E. John Newell."

"TO EDWARD COOKE, ESQ.

"Sir,—As I hope in a few days to present you with my history in print, I shall not trouble you much at present, as in *it*, you will see my reasons for *deserting*, and for first becoming, one of the *Battalion of Testimony;* on mature reflection I am confident you must say—to yourself, I have acted right.

I shall not pretend to say I am beyond your power, but should you ever arrest me, you will find my heart was never afraid, to end the project I had once began. You will know, not a friendship for Government, but my affection for the Murdoch family, was my reason for becoming an *Informer;* that attachment having ceased, the tie that bound me to you was no more, and I am again what I then was. Connected with Murdoch, *I was a villain,* but unconnected with him cease to be so.

" I think you will now be tired of the business of information, and I assure you you will shortly have no occasion for it,—think how disgraceful must appear such connexions, and support, when even spies and informers scorn and fly their association, and throw themselves on the forgiveness of their injured country, for being awhile connected with such miscreants. I hope you will now acquit me of the charge of want of feeling,—I return you thanks for the numberless favours you have conferred on me, and assure you that I would not exchange one single hour of my present happiness for ten thousand times the sums you have already lavished on me. I have no occasion *now* for pistols, the propriety of my present behaviour is guard enough, the forgiveness of my country rewards it; every honest man is my friend, and for the other part of the community, their esteem is a disgrace. My bosom is what it has not been this long time, *the seat of contentment;* and I thank my God for having saved me from impending ruin. E. J. Newell."

A communication being now opened between Mrs. Murdoch and me, she agreed and accomplished an elopement, and after living with me for twelve days, I found it necessary to quit the kingdom; and in order to get rid of her I informed Murdoch where she was, who all this time with George had been scouring the country in quest of her, and accordingly this pot-valiant hero attended, and carried her home with every joy and forgiveness.

Having now submitted to the public, in my own illiterate stile, this production, the impartiality and truth of which my letters of correspondence (seized by Alderman Exshaw, and deposited in the Castle,) will best show: and, if this voluntary publication of my own infamy, and proclaiming to the world the conduct of a desperate and wicked junto, can in any degree make a restitution for the perjuries and crimes I have committed, my object is fully answered; and with every respect for that public, to which I have been so great a traitor, I subscribe myself the public's most obedient servant,

"E. J. NEWELL."

No. II.

THE PEDIGREE OF MR. EDMUND SHEEHY'S FAMILY.*

THIS ancient family possessed a large estate on the banks of the river Dee, in the county of Limerick, from the time of Maurice, the first Earl of Desmond, whose daughter was married to Morgan Sheehy, who got the said estate from the earl as a portion with his wife.

From the above Morgan Sheehy was lineally descended Morgan Sheehy of Ballyallenane. The said

* It has long been the custom in Ireland to represent the character of those men who have been basely sacrificed to the Moloch of Orange ascendency (under any of its names or forms) as persons of desperate fortunes, men of no rank in society, or repute, or property in the country. The policy that dictated this course was not an unwise one for the interests of oppression. Edmund Sheehy is only heard of in the various accounts to which I have referred, as an associate of low and lawless wretches banded together for the pnrpose of maraud-ing and murdering their opponents. The folfowing account of his origin and the family connexions of Edmund Sheehy will perhaps be read with more interest than ever will be felt in the memories of the persecutors of his race, the Tolers, the Hewetsons, the Bagnells, the Bagwells, and the Maudes.

Morgan married Ellen Butler, daughter of Pierce, Earl of Ormond, and the widow of Connor O'Brien, Earl of Thomond, and had issue Morgan Sheehy.

The said Morgan Sheehy married Catherine Mac Carthy, daughter to Mac Donnough Mac Carthy More of Dunhallow, in the county of Cork, and had issue Morgan Sheehy.

The said Morgan Sheehy married Joan, daughter of David, Earl of Barrymore, in the county of Cork, and secondly, Lady Alice Boyle, eldest daughter of Richard, earl of Cork, and had issue Morgan Sheehy and Meanus, from whom the Sheehys, of Imokilly and county of Waterford, are descended.

The said Morgan married Catherine, the eldest of the five daughters of Teige O'Brien, of Ballycovrig, and of Elizabeth, daughter of Maurice, Earl of Desmond. He had issue three sons, John, Edmund, and Roger, and five daughters. Of the daughters, Joan married Thomas Lord Southwell; Ellen married Philip Magrath, of Sleady Castle, in the county of Waterford, Esq.; Mary married Eustace, son of Sir John Brown, of Cammus, Bart.; Winifred married Sir James Galloway, Bart.; and Anne married Colonel Gilbrern, of Kilmallock.

Of the five daughters of the above Tiege O'Brien, Catherine married the above Morgan Sheehy, Esq.; Honoria married Sir John Fitzgerald, of Cloyne, Bart.; Mauden married O'Shaughnessy, of Gort; Julia married Mac Namara, of Cratala; and Mary married Sir Thurlough Mac Mahon, of Cleane, in the county of Clare, Bart.

Of the three sons of Morgan Sheehy, Esq., and Catherine O'Brien, John, the eldest, married Mary, daughter of James Casey, of Rathcannon, in the county of Limerick, Esq. (It was in this John's time, about 1650, that Cromwell dispossessed the family of their estates.) The said John had issue John Sheehy.

The said John married Catherine, daughter of Donnough O'Brien of Dungillane, Esq. He had issue Charles Sheehy.

The said Charles married Catherine Ryan, daughter of Matthew Ryan, Esq., and of Catherine Fitzgerald, daughter of Sir John Fitzgerald, of Clonglish, Bart.; and had issue John and William Sheehy, of Spittal.

The said John married Honoria Sullivan, maternal granddaughter to Mc Brien, of Bally Sheehan, and had issue one son and two daughters, viz., William Sheehy, Esq., of Bawnfowne, county of Waterford, and Eleanor and Eller.

The said Eleanor married William Cranick, of Galbally, Esq., and had issue Ellen, who married Timothy Quinlan, Esq., of Tipperary. (Here there is an omission of any mention of William Sheehy's marriage, or of the issue of it, except of one son, Edmund. There were three daughters: Bridget married Pierce Meagher, of Rathclough; Honora married James Fitzgerald, of Kilkanabrui; Ellen married Anthony Dwyer, of Ballydenaugh. The late counsellor Dominick Ronayne's mother was the daughter of Pierce Meagher. The mother of the present parish priest of Clogheen, Dr. Kelly, was the daughter of James Fitzgerald.)

Edmund Sheehy, Esq., son of the above named William Sheehy, the brother of Eleanor and Eller, married Margaret O'Sullivan, of Ballylegate, and had issue Robert and James Sheehy, and two daughters, Ellen and Mary.

Robert, son of the abovenamed Edmund, married, and had issue three sons: James went to America, and died there, leaving no issue. Mary married—Collins. Ellen married Edmund Power, Esq., of Curragheen, in the county of Waterford; and had issue Anne, who died in her tenth year, and Michael, Margaret, Ellen, and Mary Ann, the surviving grandchildren of Edmund Sheehy.

No. III.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF DR. MACNEVEN, A. O'CONNOR, CHARLES TEELING, AND HAMILTON ROWAN, RESPECTING RUMOURS PREJUDICIAL TO THE CHARACTER OF S. NEILSON.

Extract of a letter from Dr. Macneven to William Neilson.

"My dear William,—The receipt of your letter gave me great pleasure. I was glad to find that you remember an old friend, and that your mother, self, and sisters are all well. I have the best wishes for you on your own account, and certainly not a little on that of your *excellent father*. I hope you will always imitate his INTEGRITY and HONOUR; but be more careful of your health."

From Dr. Macneven to the Daughter of Neilson.

"I feel the strongest conviction, the result of long familiar acquaintance, that Neilson was utterly incapable of treachery to his friends, or to his country; if I could believe him guilty of such baseness, I should not know whom to trust. He was latterly fidgetty in his motions, owing to the constant agitation of his mind, and would start up, and walk about, and sit down, many times in an hour. One of these starts might easily coincide with the entrance of the soldiers. No. I cannot possibly believe him unfaithful."

C. Teeling, his old friend, speaks of him, "as a man of high principle, warm feeling, and ardent patriotism. The intimate friend of Lord Edward, we know that he never contemplated his betrayal,—that such a proceeding must have belied his nature."

Arthur O'Connor states that, "as far as he could learn, no one betrayed Lord Edward Fitzgerald. He believes the imprudent visits Neilson paid him at

Murphy's were the cause of his being discovered. Certainly Neilson never betrayed him."

Hamilton Rowan speaks of "having had a long and sincere regard for S. Neilson, and the strictest conviction of his patriotism and integrity."

And, indeed, if a doubt can exist of the fidelity of Neilson to his cause, and to him especially who was the main supporter of it, for its removal it is only necessary to refer to the preface to the second edition of Mr. Moore's Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, wherein the subject of the preceding observations is referred to.

No. IV.

NEILSON AND OTHER POPULAR LEADERS—ELECTIONEERING AGENTS OF THE REFORM CANDIDATE FOR THE REPRESENTATION OF THE COUNTY DOWN, IN 1790—THE HONOURABLE ROBERT STEWART.

An electioneering circular, written in June, 1790, giving the names of many of the Belfast leaders, who were the supporters of *the Independent interest*, as represented by *Robert Stewart*, the juvenile patriot, whose early promise was realised after the fashion of the great men of those times—by Lord Castlereagh a few years later.

"Sir,—At a meeting of the committee who conducted the late election for this county, on behalf of *the Independent interest*, at the Donegal Arms, Belfast, on the 11th June, 1790, the following gentlemen were appointed a *standing committee*, for the purpose of supporting the Independent interest of the county of Antrim. The first meeting is to be at Randalstown, on the 12th August next, when your attendance is particularly requested.

"I am, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

"Samuel Neilson, Secretary.

"*Belfast, 20th June*, 1790.

"Mariot Dalway, Esq.; Edward Jones Agnew, Esq.; Thomas Morris Jones, Esq.; Thomas Thompson, Esq.; Alexander M'Manus, Esq.; Hugh Boyd, Esq.; John Staples, Esq.; John H. O. Hara, Esq.; John Stewart, Esq.; Langford Heyland, Esq.; Waddell Cunningham, Esq.; Robert Thomson, Esq.; William Sharman, Esq.; Clotworthy Rowley, Esq.; Henry William Shaw, Esq.; Barth. M'Naghten, Esq.; James White, Esq.; William Duffin, Esq.; Robert Campbell, Esq.; Charles Adair, Esq.; Adam Dickey, Esq.; John M'Clean; James Dickey; Alexander Henry, Esq; Alexander Crawford, Esq., M.D.; Rev. John Lang; Rev. John Thomson; Rev. James Cumming; George Tandy; John Gillilan; William Robert Adair; Samuel Thompson; William Sinclaire; Alexander M'Neil; Robert Gamble; Joseph Walker; Archibald Stewart; Hugh Anderson; John Birnie; James Barber; Val. Whitta; Thomas Dickey; Samuel Neilson."

No. V.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE "NORTHERN STAR"—SUBSTANCE OF ARTICLES OF PARTNERSHIP ENTERED INTO.

The 3rd of July, 1793, a partnership was entered into between Samuel Neilson, William Magee, Robert Callwell, William Tennent, Gilbert M'Ilvaine, jun., Henry Haslitt, William M'Cleery, John Haslitt, John Rabb, William Simms, John Boyle, and Robert Simms, all of Belfast.—The parties hereunto have agreed upon a partnership to carry on the printing and other business, particularly the printing and publishing of a newspaper, called the *Northern Star*, for the term of 21 years, from January, 1792. The said business to be carried on by Samuel Neilson, with the assistance of a committee; he, S. Neilson, to receive a salary of 100*l.* per annum, for taking

charge of management. The stock in trade of said partnership to be 2000*l.*, divided into forty shares, of 50*l.* each. Neilson to have three shares, Magee three, Calwell three, Tennent three, M'Ilvane two, Henry Haslitt three, M'Cleery two, J. Haslitt one, Rabb three, William Simms two, Boyle three, Robert Simms two. And further, S. Neilson was to advance 500*l.* as manager and editor, and to hold ten shares in addition to the three former, making in all thirteen shares. No partner to sell or alienate his shares without the consent of the majority of the copartners.—Signed by the twelve partners.

Signed and delivered in presence of

JOHN TISDALL,
MATTHEW HUGHES.

END OF VOL. I.

INDEX

TO THE FIRST VOLUME.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

PAGE

Agrarian outrages, from 1760 . . . i
,, ,, Young's account of . . ii
,, ,, M. S.'s pamphlet . . iii
,, ,, causes v
,, ,, Government inquiry . . vii
,, ,, styled Popish rebellion . . viii
,, ,, accounts of, falsified . . ,,
,, ,, accounts in *London Gazette*, 1762 ,,
,, ,, attempts to implicate Catholic gentry . . . ,,
,, ,, similar attempts at later periods ix
Sheehy, Rev. Nicholas, beginning of persecution . xi
,, ,, accused of Whiteboyism . ,,
Drogheda, Earl of, sent to the disturbed districts . xii
French money, introduction of, asserted by Musgrave ,,
,, contradicted by Curry . . ,,
,, Lord Charlemont's allusion to . ,,
Troops in the disturbed districts . . . xiii
Military exploits of Messrs. Bagnel, Maude, and Bagwell . . . . . ,,
Toler, Daniel, High Sheriff of Tipperary . . ,,
Sheehy, Nicholas, his early history . . ,,

PAGE

John Bridge tried by court-martial . . xiii
„ tortured to extort confession . . „
Sheehy, first proceedings against . . . xiv
Bridge's disappearance, reward for information . „
Acton, Sir Richard, his humanity as a judge . „
Dr. Lucas, his clamour against the lenity of Acton . „
Sheehy's surrender to Mr. O'Callaghan . . xv
„ his trial in the King's Bench, Dublin . xvii
„ his alleged connexion with Whiteboys . xviii
„ his opposition to extortions of tithe-jobbers „
„ his persecution xix
O'Callaghan, Mr., denounced by Bagwell . . xx
Cahir, Lord James „ „ . . „
Hewetson, Rev. J., his black list . . . „
Sheehy, informations against . . . xxi
Popish priest "presented" . . . xxii
Popish priest, Michael Quinlan, "presented" . „
Informers, 1763 . . . . . „
Witnesses for prisoners intimidated . . xxiii
Sheehy and others indicted in 1765 . . xxiv
Maude, Sir John, High Sheriff in 1765 . . „
Sheehy's acquittal in Dublin in 1766 . . xxv
„ transmission to Clonmel . . „
„ new charge of murder against him . xxvi
„ trial on that charge . . . xxvii
„ his witness, Mr. Keating, committed . xxviii
„ his witness tried for murder, &c. . xxix
„ at the trial, conduct of Maude, &c. . xl
Toohy, John, an informer, maltreated . . xlii
Sheehy, Roger, tried for murder of Bridge . xliii
Dunlea, Mary, an informer, her character . . „
Lonergan, John, an informer, his character . xliv
Bridge, John, an account of . . . xlv
„ „ his alleged murder . . . „

PAGE

Sheehy's letter to Major Sirr . . . xlix
Sheehy, question of his knowledge of the murder . l
„ his modern maligners . . . lv
Murderers of Bridge . . . . „
Popish priests, laws against . . . lvii
"Popish plot," conspiracy against Catholic gentry . lix
Edmund Sheehy, victim of Catholic gentry . „
Buxton, James „ „ . . „
Farrell, James „ „ . . „
Sheehy, Buxton, and Farrell indicted . . lxi
„ charged with the murder of Bridge . „
„ witnesses against . . . lxii
„ „ their conviction . . lxv
„ Edmund, memorial to Judge Clayton . lxvi
„ Buxton, and Farrell, their execution . lxix
„ dying declaration of . . . lxx
Buxton, „ „ lxxiii
Farrell, „ „ lxxvi
Sheehy's wife, interview with her husband . lxxviii
Sheehy, Morgan, and others indicted for Bridge's murder lxxx
„ Roger, again indicted . . . „
Catholic gentry marked out for persecution . lxxxi
„ Nagle, James, Esq. „ . . „
„ Keating, Thomas, Esq. „ . . „
„ Burke, Edmund, Esq. „ . . „
„ Trial of Messrs. Keating and Doherty lxxxii
Sheehy, Roger, again indicted, tried, and acquitted lxxxiii
Burke, Edmund the celebrated, attempt to implicate . „
"Sheehy's Jury," fate of several . . lxxxiv
R. C. Archbishop of Cashel, information against lxxxvi
Use made of a reprobate priest . . . „
Persecutors complimenting one another . lxxxvii
Persecutors, address of Tipperary grand jury to . „

PAGE

Persecutors, address of Dublin grand jury to lxxxvii
Agrarian disturbances in the North . lxxxix
„ Hearts of Oak and Hearts of Steel . „
„ Narrative of J. Hope . . . „

CHAPTER I.

Neilson, Samuel, Memoir of . . . 73
„ early history 74
Whig club, Northern 75
Society of United Irishmen, origin . . 79
„ in connexion with Catholic claims . 81
Dungannon Convention of 1793 . . . „
Belfast, public meeting in 1793 . . . „
„ Getty, Robert, in 1793 . . . „
„ Thompson, Robert, in 1793 . . „
„ Neilson, Samuel, in 1793 . . „
„ Kelburn, Sinclair, Rev., in 1793 . . 82
Dungannon Convention of 1793 . . . 83
Catholic claims discussed at Belfast meeting . 84
„ Tone's services . . . 85
„ meeting in Dublin . . . 86
„ 1792, Dr. Macneven's first appearance . . . . „
„ 1793, Wellesley, Arthur, Lieutenant, first appearance . . 87
„ 1793, Wellesley, Arthur, first speech 88
„ Toler, Mr., opposed to . . 89
„ influence of, on Society of United Irishmen . . . 90

CHAPTER II.

Tone's first connexion with Belfast . . 91
„ introduced by Russell . . . 92

PAGE

Tone, his opinion of Neilson, Simms, M'Cabe . 92
Society of United Irishmen, originators . . ,,
,, Russell, Neilson, M'Cracken, Tone . ,,
Tone, Russell, and Neilson, early opinions . 93
Secret Society of Belfast in 1791 . . . 94
United Irishmen, first meeting of . . . ,,
Ulster Directory 95
O'Connor and Lord E. Fitzgerald in Belfast . 96

CHAPTER III.

Neilson's active exertions 97
Peep-of-day boys and defenders . . . ,,
Efforts of Neilson and Tone to restore peace . ,,
,, Keogh and M'Nally to restore peace . ,,
Neilson, efforts of Teeling, "The Diamond" . 98
"Northern Star" established . . . 100
,, prospectus of . . . ,,
,, political objects . . . ,,
M'Art's fort, vow of Neilson, Russell, &c. . . 101
"Northern Star" prosecutions, &c.. . . 103
Neilson, Russell, &c., arrested . . . ,,
Neilson committed to prison . . . 107
Neilson, Mrs. Bond's communication with prisoners . 109
,, Lord O'Neil's humane interference . . ,,
Teeling, Charles, imprisoned . . . ,,
,, application to Lord Castlereagh . . ,,
Carhampton's night visit to Newgate . . 110

CHAPTER IV.

Northern prisoners confined in Newgate . . 115
Neilson visited by Lord Castlereagh . . 116
Martin Ferris' proposal for evidence . . 117
Informers, consequences of their employment . 118

PAGE

Informers, Bird John's career . . . 119
„ „ his letters . . . 121

CHAPTER V.

Neilson liberated 134
„ attempt to arrest him . . . 135
Sweetman, John, meeting at his brewery . . 137
„ sergeants in waiting . . 138
„ Reynolds, Thomas, present . „
Neilson's renewed activity . . . „
„ visit to Mr. Grattan . . . 139
„ in communication with Lord Edward . 140
Directory, division in its councils . . . 141
Neilson, Lord Edward, arrest of . . . 143
„ attempt to liberate Lord Edward, &c. . 144

CHAPTER VI.

Neilson's arrest, 22nd May, 1798 . . . 145
„ the Sheares, Bond, Byrne, M'Cann indicted 147
„ refuses to engage counsel . . 148
Compact, first overtures and negotiation . . 149
„ pending negotiations, executions . . „

CHAPTER VII.

Neilson's narrative of Compact with Government . 151
„ examination before Secret Committee . 165
„ denial of having implored pardon . 171
„ correspondence with Government . 176

CHAPTER VIII.

Compact, Russell's narrative of correspondence with Government 181
„ Russell's account of his arrest, &c. . 193

PAGE

CHAPTER IX.

Compact, Sweetman's diary . . . 199

CHAPTER X.

Convivial habits, meetings at taverns, &c. . . 206
Byrne, William Michael 209
Bond, Oliver 211
,, his sudden death, &c. . . 213
Publication of letter of O'Connor, Emmet, and Mac-
neven 216
Publication of Parliamentary Proceedings . . ,,
,, M'Laughlin, Cornelius, and Lyons,
,, Lewis, called to the Bar . ,,
Hutchinson, Barrington, Plunket, Egan, &c. . ,,

CHAPTER XI.

Removal of State Prisoners to Fort George . 220
Neilson's illness on board 221

CHAPTER XII.

Neilson's letters to Tone 229

CHAPTER XIII. TO XX.

Neilson's letters to his family . . 238 to 311

CHAPTER XX.

Maxwell, Col. (Lord Farnham) his motion, 24th
March, 1798 312
,, ,, his motion for the execution of the
state prisoners 313
Amnesty Act 315
,, not carried into effect . . ,,
,, Government circular to counteract it 316
,, exceptions to it defeat its avowed
object . . . 317

PAGE

Amnesty Act, Camden's proclamation . . 320
„ Lake's, Lord, ditto . . . 321
„ Lord Castlereagh's ditto . . 323
Indemnity Act for Carhampton's protection . „

CHAPTER XXI.

Neilson in Holland 328
„ communication with Rowan . . „
„ return to Ireland . . . 329
„ his companion, Campbell's "Exile of Erin" 330
„ accompanied by James Hope to the North 331
„ arrival in Belfast . . . 332
Jackson, of Cremorne, uncle of Mrs. Bond . . „
„ daughter married to William Tennent . „
Tennent's daughter married to Mr. Emerson . 333
Neilson, sheltered in Dublin by C. O'Hara . „
„ departure for America . . . 334
„ arrival in America . . . „
„ death 336

CHAPTER XXII.

Neilson's character 337
„ Mrs., her exertions for her family . . 340
„ William Bryson, son of . . . 341

APPENDIX.

Spy system, its effects 346
„ assassination arising from . . 350
„ illustrated by "The Life of Newell" . 359
Sheehy, Edmund, family pedigree of . . 425
Neilson, opinions of his associates of his fidelity . 428
„ electioneering services to Castlereagh : 430
"Northern Star," Articles of Partnership . . „

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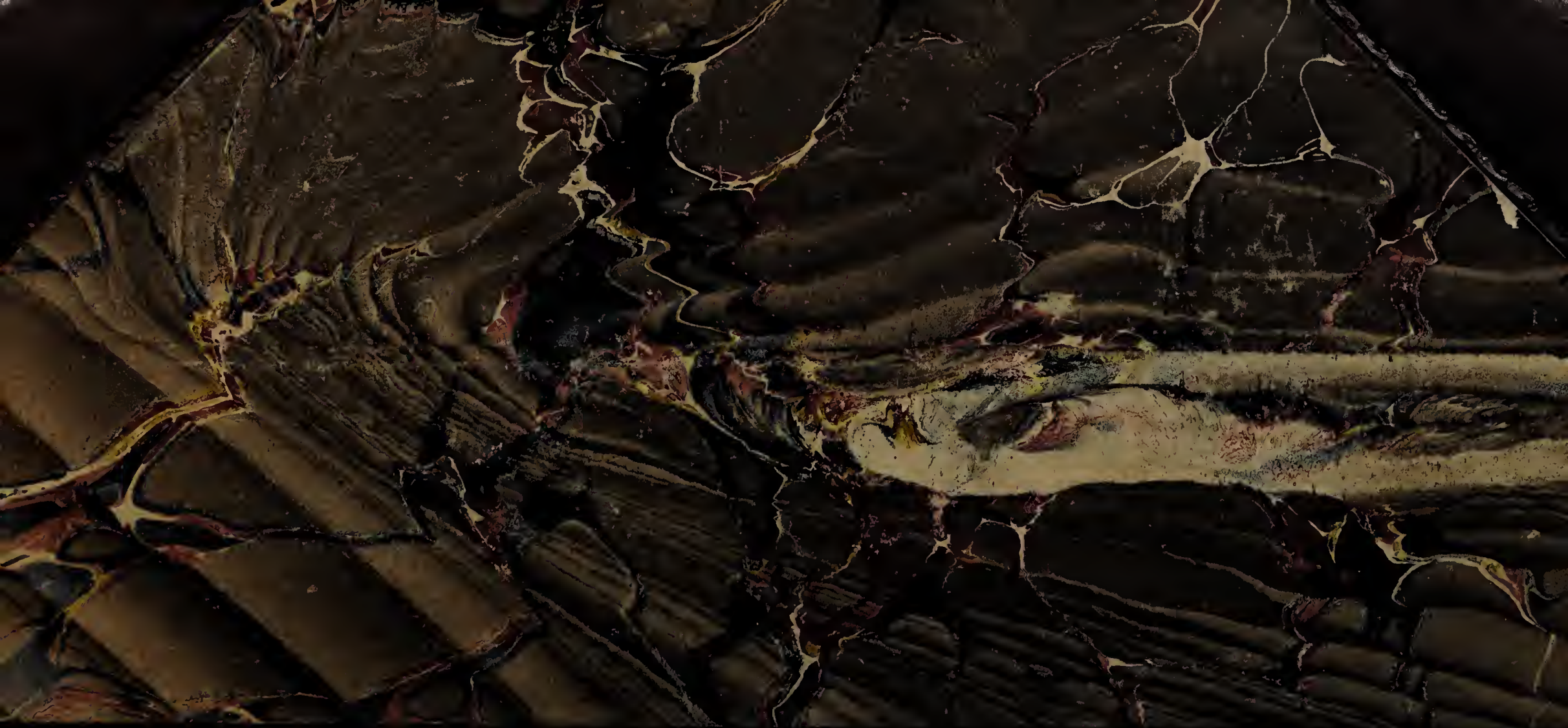
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